

WILLIAM A. BRADY: THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

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## PREFACE

During his lifetime, William A. Brady was one of the most active and successful producers in the American theatre. Since his death, in 1950, his reputation has faded into relative obscurity. No study of his career has been made, and he is mentioned only briefly and without regularity in works dealing with the American theatre of the first half of the twentieth century. This study will examine his life and career as a theatrical producer in order to demonstrate the ways in which Brady's career exemplified certain aspects of the early twentieth century American theatre.

The most useful materials in the preparation of this study have been clipping files, letters, scrapbooks, and miscellaneous documents in the Theatre Collection of the Lincoln Center Library of the Performing Arts. That information has been supplemented with periodical material from the Players Club Library and the University of Florida Library.

Various biographies of actors, actresses, and stage and screen personalities who worked with, or knew, Mr. Brady also provided data and insights into his life

and career. Mr. Brady's autobiography, Showman, and interviews with Miss Helen Hayes, Miss Madge Kennedy, and Miss Beulah Bondi provided further information as to the producer's life style, temperament, and business acumen.

The primary concern of this study is Mr. Brady's career as a Broadway producer, although information concerning his paratheatrical and motion picture activities is included in the study's review and examination of his activities. The study of Brady as a Broadway producer furnishes an account of a man who was, by his own admission, a theatrical businessman and showman in the tradition of P. T. Barnum, Charles Frohman, and Florenz Zeigfeld. Brady's activities outside the legitimate New York theatre were largely secondary in terms of their importance to Brady and to the American theatre. Those secondary activities, however, provide additional evidence of Brady's business acumen and his flair for showmanship. Jointly, the two spheres of activity provide ample evidence of the accuracy of Brady's self-image.

Chapter I of this study consists of a review of developments in the American theatre between 1890 and 1940. Particular attention is given to major changes which occurred during that period in order to provide a description of the milieu in which Brady lived and worked. Chapter II provides an account of Brady's life and a record of

his legitimate theatrical career. In the interest of clarity and accuracy, Chapter II has been divided into three periods. That three-part division was suggested by the fact that three distinct, significant phases of Brady's career can be identified. Chapter III utilizes examples to indicate Brady's effective and flamboyant use of promotional publicity, a tool of the theatrical trade he regarded as indispensable. In addition, the chapter identifies the several unique, new promotional tactics which Brady introduced to the theatrical scene. A brief essay, including an evaluation of Brady's career and its relationship to the theatre of his time, concludes this study. The names and dates of Brady's New York productions are provided in the Appendix.

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This study provides a review of the career of William A. Brady and a record of his activities as a producer of legitimate theatre in New York City. The purpose of the study was to establish the extent and significance of his contributions to American theatre.

The initial phase of the study consists of a survey of major changes occurring in the American professional theatre between 1890 and 1940. The developments thus summarized make it possible to place Brady's life and career in their proper perspective. An account of Brady's achievements and ventures which the study contains judicates his involvement and influence in the artistic and financial aspects of the American theatre. Further, through the use of his personal notes, news clippings, and interviews with his contemporaries, the study provides



some indications of the Brady personality which figured prominently in his work.

It is evident from the information cited in this study that William A. Brady exemplified the stereotypical "businessman of the theatre." Details of his career indicate, however, Brady also brought a particularly innovative and artistically sound sense of showmanship to the business of producing and promoting popular entertainment on Broadway. The unusual quantity of Brady's production activity and his knowledge of several areas of the entertainment industry made him one of the most successful producers the American stage has known.

## CHAPTER I

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE, 1890-1950

With the approach of the twentieth century, theatre in America moved into a position of world leadership and its commercial aspects experienced a concomitant expansion. That expansion was reflected in efforts to meet the demands of a growing, essentially conservative, middle-class audience. European innovations in dramatic theory and technical advances spawned by new scientific discoveries were rapidly adapted to please the growing American audiences. Theatrical companies were quick to employ the increased illusionism made possible by the European-fostered, three-dimensional scenery and the use of the safer and more versatile electric lighting equipment. Along with the developments in scenic enterprise, producers added more authentic properties and innovations such as historical accuracy in costuming.

The changes fostered by the late nineteenth century growth in public demand for dramatic entertainment were not limited to the technical aspects of production, but extended into virtually all aspects of the American theatre. As audiences grew, a distinct effort was made to explore

and satisfy their preferences. As a result, there was a significant increase in the variety of entertainment being offered to the public. Also, in order to better serve the growing theatre audiences, more theatres were constructed and the basic organization of theatrical business in the United States changed.

The middle-class audiences of the late nineteenth century insisted on entertainment that ranged from re-enactments of famous war battles and six-day bicycle races to the formula plays of Owen Davis, the Tom shows derived from Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel, western horse spectacles, and specialty acts. It was an era in which professional actors such as Mrs. Fiske, James O'Neill, and Sarah Bernhardt reached the height of their fame. Yet, at the same time, currently popular personalities such as the prizefighters Terence McGovern and James J. Corbett or the military hero Clay Blaney made successful appearances on the stages of the popular-priced theatres. In the main, the late nineteenth century became an era in which employment as an actor or actress depended largely upon such nonartistic factors as one's public reputation and the types of roles one had previously played.

The popular-priced theatres operating between 1890 and 1910—the theatres frequented by the majority of the growing new audience—offered sensational melodramas. These melodramas presented

for their imaginative patrons what was probably the most curious parade of living specimens ever visited upon the stage.<sup>1</sup>

A sampling of the theatrical personalities and acts of the period supports this statement. For example, Montgomery Irving, a former strong-man in vaudeville, became an actor in Charles E. Blaney's For His Brother's Crime. In the play Irving was required to support a wooden bridge while a horse-drawn carriage with three occupants galloped across it.<sup>2</sup> Among the staples of the popular-priced theatres were melodramas featuring "Real Indians." To illustrate, in 1903, a "Tribe of Real Indians" appeared in the production of The Queen of the Highway. They were supported by a cast of twenty-five professional actors and actresses, five "educated horses," and two "man-eating wolves."<sup>4</sup>

The nineteenth century has often been referred to as the age of melodrama,<sup>5</sup> and melodrama remained the dominant form of dramatic literature in America until the end of the century when the realism of Zola, Ibsen, Shaw and others gained popularity and exerted its influence on the American stage. Melodrama enjoyed what can best be described as mass popularity which neither romanticism, emerging at about the same time as melodrama, nor realism, reflecting an increased interest in science and technology, ever achieved. Melodrama was essential to the theatre of the mass audience, inasmuch as it reinforced basic

assumptions about life and allowed spectators to escape into a world constructed as they believed it should be. The popular theatre provided the melodrama that was "the natural theatrical diet for the hard-working, empire-building American pioneer."<sup>6</sup> Charles Frohman, perhaps the most successful producer of the period, described the dramatic fare preferred by the American public as follows:

American playgoers, and in fact, playgoers the world over, are not looking for literary fireworks behind the footlights—they want plays that interest and hold them. They want action—dramatic incidents—and above all, they want a strong love story.<sup>7</sup>

In the last half of the nineteenth century, playwrights like Augustin Daly, Dion Boucicault, and Steele MacKaye were satisfying the prevailing taste for the melodramatic by providing American playgoers with plays like Under the Gaslight, The Octoroon, and Hazel Kirke. Although the term "melodrama" fell into disuse, the melodramatic play lived on, with popularity and prosperity, well into the twentieth century. Admittedly, in the 1920s murder mysteries, such as The Bat (1920) by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Avery Hopgood, were in vogue and, by the 1930s, psychological thrillers like Emyln Williams's Night Must Fall became popular. Regardless of the labels assigned to these later plays, however, they remained essentially melodrama.

The trite sentiments and elemental sympathies of nineteenth century melodrama found expression in an approach

to acting which is primarily external. Unlike modern approaches to actor training, which tend to combine external techniques with an internal, emotional motivation for actions, nineteenth century acting teachers and texts stressed stage techniques, movement, diction, and pronunciation. Schools of acting were concerned almost exclusively with what can best be termed an external means of eliciting a response from the audience. As a result there was a tendency to codify human emotions and to develop standardized, conventional poses which would convey a given emotion and gain the desired response. Critical judgement of an actor's performance was often based on elocutionary precepts for pronunciation, voice, gesture, emotional portrayal, and naturalness.<sup>8</sup> Further the nineteenth century actor, in following these precepts, adhered to certain universal rules or laws which, in extremes, led to stilted posturing, declamation, and blind obedience to guidelines for the correct placement of hands, feet, and head.<sup>9</sup> The prevalence of elocutionary principles in American acting as late as the turn of the century resulted from the fact that that generation of actors had been influenced by their elocution-trained predecessors.<sup>10</sup>

Although melodrama and its related acting styles persisted beyond the turn of the century, changes took place in American theatre during the second and third decades of the twentieth century which affected the basic tenets of the

actor's art. Those actors who were at odds with the old elocutionary methods found a new approach to acting in the teachings of Constantin Stanislavski. Stanislavski's "Method," first seen in America during the 1922-23 theatrical season, stressed the actor's own creative and imaginative faculties. Richard Boleslavsky, a Stanislavski pupil, began teaching the "Method" at the American Laboratory Theatre in 1923. Other followers of the Stanislavski method associated themselves with the Theatre Guild in 1928. The culmination of the experimentation with the "Method" was perhaps realized in 1931 with Lee Strasberg's and Harold Clurman's Group Theatre.<sup>11</sup>

The aforementioned increase in the popularity of all types of entertainment had a great effect on American theatre construction during the late 1800s and early 1900s. As a result of the growing number of patrons, or potential patrons, Broadway commercial playhouses were built for the purpose of crowding as many paying customers as possible into the available space. The architecture was dominated by the traditional proscenium design and the auditorium included a main floor, a balcony, and often a gallery. Experimentation and innovation in theatrical design represented a gamble only a few producers or proprietors were willing to take. Not only were theatres designed with an eye to the maximum seating potential and its attendant profits, but they were marked by a singular, dated

architectural style. The attitude governing theatre design was one of conservative reverence for the style people had liked in the past.

The expanded commercial aspects of American theatre, noted above, required substantial changes in the basic organization of theatrical companies. The repertory system, which consisted primarily of resident groups that used the same actors and the same theatres for a series of different productions, disappeared and was replaced by the more profitable long-run show. Some permanent acting companies, such as Wallack's, Palmer's, and Daly's in New York, managed to survive until the turn of the century, but they were rapidly replaced by the more economical system under which a different company of type-cast actors was assembled for each new production. The new system proved so popular that the type-cast stars themselves began to assemble their own touring companies, complete with supporting casts and scenery. These companies, called combinations, proliferated to the point that, by 1880, some star actors had formed duplicate companies to more thoroughly satisfy the national demand for particularly popular plays.<sup>12</sup> By 1900 these New York-based combination companies had developed large audiences as a result of their nation-wide tours. The size of the audience available to a touring company is suggested by the fact that, by 1900, it was large enough to support 500 individual productions touring on established routes.<sup>13</sup>



By the late 1800s entertainment had become a packaged commodity requiring great financial resources and the sponsorship and support of theatre managers throughout the nation. In time, the traditional star-managed combination companies, with their limited personnel and small budgets, became obsolete and inadequate as a result of the financial and logistical problems which accompanied the expansion of the touring concept. To be profitable a production had to be financed and organized for its New York engagement and then economically routed along its subsequent tour of small town theatres. Few of the star actors were capable of handling the task. The need was met by the producer, a businessman capable of selling, and willing to sell, entertainment to the American public.

The reaction of some members of the theatrical profession to this dependence on businessmen was expressed by William Winter.

The major causes are the prevalence of Materialism, infecting all branches of thought, and of Commercialism, infecting all branches of action. The public is not blameless, because public opinion and sentiment—meaning the general condition and attitude of the public mind—reacts upon those who address the public. The theatrical audience of this period (1908) is largely composed of vulgarians who know nothing about art or literature and who care for nothing but the solace of their common tastes and animal appetites; on that point observation of the faces and manners of the multitude would satisfy any thoughtful observer: and, because the audience is largely of this character, the

Theatre has become precisely what it might have been expected to become when dependent on such patronage. It has passed from the hands that ought to control it,—the hands either of Actors who love and honor their art or of men endowed with the temperament [sic] of the Actor and acquainted with his art and its needs,—and, almost entirely, it has fallen into the clutches of sordid, money-grubbing tradesmen, who have degraded it into a bazaar. Throughout the length and breadth of the United States spectators have captured the industry that they call "the Amusement Business" and have made "a corner in Theatricals."<sup>14</sup>

By 1900 the producer had risen to a position of dominance in American theatre by using his business expertise to meet the expanding needs of the theatrical industry. The producer would select a play, assemble a company, rent a theatre, and pay the production expenses. Following a New York engagement, the producer proceeded to send his company out on a tour of previously contracted independent theatres. The tour theatres were, at times, owned by the producer of the show or by his New York booking agency, thus giving him additional control over any profits realized by the company.

This producer-dominated system ultimately resulted in power struggles for control of New York's theatres and the theatres in cities and towns which lay along profitable tour routes. The power struggles involved revolts by independent producers and stars, notably Harris G. Fiske, Mrs. Fiske, and David Belasco, against an organization known as the Theatrical Syndicate. The major battle in this struggle for

control of the commercial theatre scene involved a fight between the Syndicate and the producing-booking agency formed by the famous Shubert Brothers.

Because of its dominant place in the theatre industry at the turn of the century and its role in making theatre "Big Business," the Syndicate warrants special attention in an overview of the theatre of the period. The Theatrical Syndicate was organized in 1896 by Sam Nixon, Fred Zimmerman, Charles Frohman, Al Hayman, Marc Klaw, and A. L. Erlanger. These men were theatre owners and producers who, by 1903, had gained effective control of the American theatre by virtue of obtaining exclusive contractual agreements with the managers of first-class theatres in contiguous cities and towns along major transportation routes. Though the exact number cannot be known, it is certain that before 1903 the organization controlled all but two or three first-class theatres in New York City and all but one each in Boston and Chicago. Other cities—Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, New Orleans, San Francisco, and hundreds of smaller towns—were completely under Syndicate control.<sup>15</sup> Once it gained control over a particular circuit, the Syndicate offered the local theatre owners a full season of top quality productions, to be furnished by the Syndicate, according to Syndicate rates. Where it could not gain control over key theatres, the Syndicate built a rival theatre, offered its finest

productions at reduced rates, and forced its competition into bankruptcy. New York producers or actors who refused to cooperate and accept Syndicate contracts were denied bookings in Syndicate theatres.

The Syndicate control was challenged during the second half of the first decade by the Shuberts, who had managed to gain the support of a few independent producers. The Shuberts, with their own theatres, gained the support of many theatrical artists by establishing an "Open Door Policy" which supposedly guaranteed artists the right to produce in Shubert theatres regardless of any previous contracts or agreements they may have had with the Syndicate. In time, the war between the Syndicate and the Shuberts lead to a deadlock, with the Syndicate controlling the major theatres and the Shuberts having the support of the profession's major actors and actresses. The power of the Syndicate and its domination of the American theatre did not diminish appreciably until 1910 when William A. Brady, himself a prosperous independent producer, contractually joined with the Shuberts to challenge Syndicate control of the theatrical scene.

The end of the Syndicate's control of American theatre came at a time when the dynamic growth in popularity which began in the latter part of the nineteenth century had reached its peak and theatre across the nation started to experience a general decline in popularity.

In 1900, as noted, as many as 500 companies (or an average of 339 companies per week) were on tour in the United States. By 1913, however, when the Syndicate's control of the theatre had disintegrated, the number had dwindled to 178 companies per week.<sup>16</sup> Further, between 1910 and 1925, the number of theatres available for legitimate productions outside the nation's leading metropolitan centers dropped from 1,549 to 674.<sup>17</sup> This "decline of the road" caused producer to re-evaluate traditional methods of gauging a play's financial potential. After the first decade of the twentieth century, theatrical success came to be measured in terms of New York box office receipts, rather than those of road theatres. Productions were based on the single play which met the established American requirement of having the capacity to appeal to a mass audience, thus insuring it a long New York run. The touring companies that were operative after the halcyon days of the "road" were those sent out from New York, either to capitalize on the success of a play's New York reputation, or to provide preview audiences for a play prior to its actual New York debut. New York City became, then, the center of American theatrical production.

The decline in popularity of legitimate theatre after the turn of the century was accompanied by, and possibly resulted from, an increase in the popularity of the motion picture. Motion pictures, which had made their

appearance in low-priced exhibition rooms, were, at first, considered to be little more than a novelty. The first public performance presented under Thomas Edison's aegis was given in Koster and Bial's Music Hall, New York, on April 23, 1896.<sup>18</sup> The presentation was such a success and fostered the production of so many other motion pictures that, by 1910, the number of people who attended movies was estimated to be twenty million.<sup>19</sup> The public had

created, within a decade, a business larger in volume than that of all spoken-drama theatres, dime museums, variety houses, lecture bureaus, concert halls, circuses, and street carnivals combined.<sup>20</sup>

Theatrical productions, cognizant of the competition posed by motion pictures, began to extend their interests from legitimate theatre into the film industry. One method of gaining entrance into the film industry was by selling plays to film companies. Producers made the works of hopeful playwrights available to film companies for use as movie plots. One such transaction involved the World Film Corporation, founded by Arthur Spiegel, of the Chicago mail order house, and Lewis J. Selznick, a former jewelry salesman turned film company manager. Spiegel and Selznick engaged the subject of this study, William A. Brady, as their director of productions, and Brady, working with the Shuberts, arranged for the purchase of various theatrical properties<sup>21</sup> for use by the World Film Corporation.

Legitimate theatre, developing through such competitive, yet cooperative, arrangements with the motion picture industry, prospered during the years immediately preceding the first World War. With America's entry into World War I, the American theatre became involved in commercial and noncommercial enterprises aimed at aiding the war effort. The noncommercial ventures included bond drives, benefit performances, and government-sponsored propaganda programs utilizing the talents of Broadway's top personalities. The commercial theatre also aided the war effort, involuntarily and somewhat indirectly, through heavy war taxes levied against all theatrical enterprises and collected at the time of ticket sales.<sup>22</sup> In spite of such taxes, theatrical activity during the war increased significantly. To illustrate, the number of new productions in New York City increased from 126 in the 1915-16 season to 156 in the 1917-18 season. Further, the number of theatres used for legitimate production in New York City grew from 37 in the 1915-16 season to 50 by the end of the 1918-19 season.<sup>23</sup>

Following the First World War, Broadway experienced a new, significant measure of growth due to the nation's general prosperity, increased urbanization, and the further decline of the touring system. As a result of these factors, particularly the postwar prosperity, the period 1910-1930 became one of unprecedented theatrical activity. The number



of New York productions per season rose steadily and reached an all time high of 264 in the 1927-28 theatrical season. To accommodate the steady increase in productions, twenty-six playhouses (either new structures or converted facilities) were opened in New York between 1924 and 1929.<sup>24</sup>

The postwar period was also a time of rebellion within the organizational structure of American theatre. In 1919 actors and playwrights demanded an effective voice in the business of theatre. As a result producers were forced to relinquish some of their almost tyrannical power. The organization of the theatre's creative personnel, or labor force, created a condition that made it impossible for producers to operate according to traditional production practices. As late as 1913, a producer often directed a play himself, kept a scenic artist on his staff to refurbish a set out of his stock pile, and paid minimum wages to cast members after a play opened. Those conditions changed after World War I when newly established theatrical unions, such as the Actors Equity Association, the Dramatists' Guild, and the Stage Workers Union, restricted the producer's power by demanding adherence to rules based on the reform of previous abuses.<sup>25</sup> By 1928, as a result of the unions' power and regulations, the producer was required to engage a director and a designer, contract with a scenic shop to build sets for each new play, and to hire,



at wages established by the various unions, actors, electricians, carpenters, costumers, and other personnel.

The Actors Equity Association took the lead in forcing producers into negotiations with theatrical personnel by calling a general strike of Equity members in 1919. The strike effectively brought the Broadway theatre, and that of many other large cities, to a standstill. Supported by the Stage Workers Union and the Dramatists' Guild, Equity succeeded in its negotiations with the leading New York producers who had established an organization known as the Producing Managers Association, to serve as their collective bargaining agency in the conflict. The results of the negotiations were standard, and equitable, contracts for Equity members which, generally, provided for minimum standards in working conditions and standard period of employment. Shortly afterward the dramatists' organization secured a standard "agreement" which guaranteed playwrights greater protection from unscrupulous producers by providing standard contractual arrangements for the payment of royalties.

The activity of the Dramatists' Guild in labor-related disputes with theatrical producers was indicative of another change in the postwar American theatre. American playwrights had been, prior to World War I, something of a novelty. The usual fare of American commercial theatres had consisted of adaptations of foreign plays,

such as those by J. M. Barrie, Ryder Haggard, and Sardou, or formula plays such as those written by Augustin Daly, Dion Boucicault, and Owen Davis. New American playwrights had been regarded by many producers as mere employees rather than as independent artists. Producers frequently retained new playwrights, not to create original works, but to rewrite work on some newly acquired play. Charles Frohman, for example, often put new American playwrights under contract in order to use their talents in adapting old or foreign plays to changing American tastes.<sup>26</sup>

The Dramatists' Guild's rise to a position of influence, and a new awareness of world drama and dramatic theories brought on by exposure to European theatre during and directly after the First World War, provided American playwrights with more opportunities for production and with greater freedom of expression. Americans generally, and American producers in particular, eventually became aware of new movements in dramatic production theories. The most significant movement, the New Stagecraft, gained popularity and artists and producers began developing and adapting its theories to the American stage.

The New Stagecraft, the term Americans applied to the European concern for artistic realism and the creation of a stage environment for each individual play, was embraced first in the United States by the little theatre movement. The little theatres were noncommercial organizations

more interested in artistic excellence than financial success. Of the early groups, the most important groups were the Washington Square Players of New York, founded in 1914, and the Provincetown Players founded in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1915. The Washington Square Players became, in 1919, the professional Theatre Guild and began producing the best in American and European drama, stressing New Stagecraft techniques. The Provincetown Players sought to encourage new American playwrights and, in so doing, they were among the first to recognize the talent of Eugene O'Neill and provide a showcase for his work. By 1925 the success of these pioneering organizations had made the New Stagecraft fully acceptable to the commercial Broadway theatres.

By accepting the New Stagecraft, New York became the scene of many new, exciting, and significant plays during the 1920s. Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Sidney Howard, S. N. Behrman and others were writing plays that overshadowed previous dramatic works in range of ideas, variety of form, and depth of characterization. O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms, Howard's What Price Glory?, and Rice's The Adding Machine, and plays of distinction by other playwrights made Broadway audiences aware of a new, mature, and vital American drama.<sup>27</sup>

This new interest in American plays by American playwrights was accompanied by a tendency to present

increasingly more daring and realistic scenes on the stage. The importation of European theories and an increased sophistication of the American playgoer demanded a heightened realism in plays. This realism frequently resulted in the treatment of sexual themes and the portrayal of increasingly risqué scenes. While they may have lacked the sophistication of idea, language and form of an O'Neill, Behrman or Rice, plays such as Belasco's Harem, Brady's A Good Bad Woman, and the Mae West production of Sex typify the popular "sex plays" which were an offshoot of the American theatre's experiments with realism. As in the case of the melodrama or the play with mass appeal, the American commercial theatre found that "sex plays" and risqué materials were good business. By the late 1920s, plays containing risqué scenes or questionable themes were being produced to such an extent that religious leaders and public reform groups demanded that government officials intervene.

Action by government officials, following the demands of the groups mentioned above, made censorship of the New York stage a crucial issue. The issue came to a head in March, 1927, when the New York Assembly amended a 1909 censorship law by adding the Wales Stage Regulation Bill. One of the provisions of the bill stated that any theatre could have its license revoked for as long as one year if a performance given there was found to be legally

obscene. This amendment, popularly termed "the padlock law," added to the liability of every person, except audience members, who knowingly aided and abetted the production of an obscene play. Those found to be in violation of the provisions of the law could be arrested on misdemeanor charges.<sup>28</sup> In spite of objections from every sector of the theatre industry, the "padlock law" remained on the New York law books in its original form until 1931.<sup>29</sup>

The prosperity and experimentation which marked the American theatre of the 1920s came to a virtual standstill with the stock market crash in 1929. The economic depression which followed the market crash dealt a stunning blow to Broadway theatre and instituted economic changes in the structure of the theatrical business. The sharp fall in personal income which accompanied the stock market failure cut theatre attendance and the number of new productions in New York City dropped sharply. For example, during the 1932-33 season, only 174 new productions were mounted in New York, as compared to 264 in the peak season of 1927-28.<sup>30</sup> By 1930 many theatres in New York and in the nation's other major cities were empty and none were being built.<sup>31</sup> Theatrical production steadily declined as the depression deepened and, by 1940, the number of New York productions had dropped to a mere 80.<sup>32</sup> Producers went bankrupt; actors were out of work and without any

prospect of future employment. By 1935 estimates of unemployed theatrical workers were set at between 20,000 and 30,000 by the Works Progress Administration, and in a survey, Actors Equity located 5000 unemployed actors in New York City alone.<sup>33</sup> Actors and technicians lucky enough to be employed were asked, and readily agreed, to take cuts in salary.<sup>34</sup> As an example of the financial straits of producers, Brady, in his autobiography, stated that his loss in the stock market was not unusually high even though he estimated it at approximately \$350,000.<sup>35</sup>

One of the major problems producers faced during this period of economic chaos was that of the increased power of the labor unions. By the mid-1920s the stagehands', the scenic designers', the playwrights', and the actors' unions not only reached the peak of their power, but they had become national in scope and jurisdiction. The Actors Equity Association had successfully established a "closed shop" policy and, by 1933, had bargained for a minimum wage scale.<sup>36</sup> Prior to the depression other unions had also obtained increased salary scales which resulted in increased production costs. In the interval between 1920 and 1930, carpenters, stagehands, and theatrical-transfer men achieved pay scale increases ranging from 174 to 522 per cent. Those increases accounted for almost 70 per cent of the total operating budget of an average Broadway production,<sup>37</sup> and represented

a cost that could not be sustained with a failing economy and sparse or nonexistent audiences.

One of the only avenues of income open to the suddenly unemployed theatre people of Broadway was the enormously popular motion picture industry. The first full length talking picture, The Jazz Singer, had been released in 1927 and, within a few years, had caused a major revolution in the film industry. Hollywood's plot and situation writers of the silent film era found themselves unable to write dialogue, and many silent screen actors found that their voices were inadequate for use in the talking pictures. Motion picture producers were forced to turn to the stage for talent appropriate to the new medium. Playwrights, actors, and directors idled as a result of Broadway's economic plight, found new employment in California and a chance to leave the near-bankrupt New York stage.

During these depression years, several outstanding experiments were launched by the federal government to provide a means of employment for theatre people forced out of work by the virtual economic shutdown of the theatre. One of those experiments, the Federal Theatre Project, was created in 1935 by an Act of Congress and, by the time of its termination in 1939, it had provided employment for over 10,000 people in forty states.<sup>38</sup>

The Federal Theatre Project, in addition to its legislated task of employing theatrical people in positions

related to their skills, also had artistic and cultural purposes. Hallie Flannigan, the director of the Project, described those purposes as

the gigantic task of bringing to people across America, hitherto unable to afford dramatic entertainment, a theatre which should reflect our country, its history, its present problems, its diverse regions and populations.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, through direct funding, the Project encouraged experimentation among other groups such as Actors Equity, the Dramatists' Guild, and the League of New York Theatres.<sup>40</sup> In portions of its own enterprise, such as the Living Newspaper series with its dramatizations of contemporary news stories, the Project explored the social problems of the day. Given this socially oriented model, other groups, such as the Workers Laboratory Theatre and John Houseman and Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre, also began to theatrically assess the problems of the era.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the economic difficulties besetting all facets of the theatre industry during the 1930s, the commercial theatre was able to maintain high standards and a high degree of artistry. Playwrights Eugene O'Neill, Sidney Howard, S. N. Behrman, Robert Sherwood, Maxwell Anderson, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams made their debut or reached the peak of their craft during this period. In terms of the graphic or scenic aspects of theatre, Mordecai Gorelik, Howard Bay, Jo Mielziner,



Norman Bel Geddes, and Joseph Urban, who rank among America's most successful and famous designers, emerged in the late twenties and the depression years. The depression gave theatre artists, particularly playwrights, a consciousness of social problems and focused their work and ideas on the individual who often is at the mercy of society. The plays of the period (the 1930s) began to reflect an optimism under which the problems were identified and it was inferred that those problems could be solved. In addition to the playwrights listed above, two of America's outstanding playwrights came to the fore in the late depression years with their dramas of "social consciousness." The playwrights in question were Lillian Hellman and Clifford Odets, both of whom were successful at coupling social consciousness to a sense of heightened theatrical realism.<sup>42</sup>

Regardless of the artistic or sociological importance of the artists mentioned above, the most popular theatrical entertainment of the 1930s and 1940s was the musical comedy. It moved from being merely an excuse for showing beautiful girls and elaborate production numbers to a new type musical. The new form integrated music, story, dance, and settings into the telling of a semi-serious story. The trend reached its culmination in 1943 with the production of Oklahoma!<sup>43</sup>

With the outbreak of World War II the normal pattern of Broadway theatre was interrupted again. The American public turned to what it perceived to be more serious and more pressing matters. As a result, theatre production declined sharply throughout the war years and reached its lowest point of activity in the 1949-50 post-war season when only sixty-two productions were staged.<sup>44</sup>

The decade of the fifties was one of diversification of the geography and philosophy of theatre in the United States. The commercial playhouses of Broadway ceased to be the only location of representative American theatre. Colleges and universities across the nation began to receive recognition for their training programs and for their quality productions. Community and regional theatres, which had evolved some three decades earlier, gained national and international reputations. The greatest force for diversification was, however, the emergence of the Off-Broadway theatres. Disenchanted and idealistic playwrights, actors, and directors established quality companies in sections of New York City far removed from the Broadway area. The Off-Broadway League of Theatres was formed in 1949<sup>45</sup> and the movement had its first true success in 1952, with the production of Tennessee Williams' Summer and Smoke at the Circle in the Square theatre.<sup>46</sup> New playwrights, directors, and actors of the limited-budget, Off-Broadway shows soon gained fame and

influence throughout the world. This open and successful break with the commercially-oriented Broadway philosophy marks the most recent major change in American theatre. Currently, theatre production in American is not dictated exclusively by commercial interests, or even audiences, as it had been for most of the first half of the century.

NOTES - CHAPTER I

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<sup>3</sup>The New York Tribune, February 14, 1897.

<sup>4</sup>The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, March 1, 1903.

<sup>5</sup>Frank M. Whiting, An Introduction to the Theatre (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), p. 71.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Frohman, Theatre Magazine (1907), p. 32.

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<sup>8</sup>Barnard Hewitt, Theatre U. S. A. 1665 to 1957 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 278.  
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<sup>10</sup>Benjamin B. Hampton, A History of the Movies (New York: Covici-Friede Publishers, 1931), p. 57.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>13</sup>New York Times, January 16, 1918.

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- 28 Ibid., p. 153-160.
- 29 The New York Times, July 22, 1933.
- 30 Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1942-1943 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1943), p. 42-43.

<sup>31</sup>John Chapman, ed., The Burns Mantle Best Plays of 1949-1950 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1950), p. 3.

<sup>32</sup>Stuart W. Little, Off-Broadway: The Prophetic Theatre (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1972), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Lang, p. 100.

<sup>35</sup>William A. Brady, Showman (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), p. 276.

<sup>36</sup>New York Times, July 22, 1933.

<sup>37</sup>Poggi, p. 69.

<sup>38</sup>Flannigan, Arena . . . , p. 16.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Jay Williams, Stage Left (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), p. 153-160.

<sup>42</sup>Stuart W. Little, Off-Broadway: The Prophetic Theater (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1972), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup>Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1942-1943 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1943), p. 42-43.

<sup>44</sup>John Chapman, ed., The Burns Mantle Best Plays of 1949-1950 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1950), p. 3.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

CHAPTER II  
LIFE AND CAREER OF WILLIAM A. BRADY

Life

William Aloysius Brady was born in San Francisco, June 19, 1863, the son of Terence A. Brady, a newspaper editor. In 1886, following his divorce from the boy's mother, Catherine O'Keefe,<sup>1</sup> the elder Brady took his son to New York City. Terence Brady then proceeded to work for the New York Herald until his death in 1878. At the time of his father's death young Brady, then fifteen years old, secured a job as steward at the New York Press Club. He soon left that position, however, and took a job as a "peanut butcher" on an emigrant train running between Omaha and San Francisco.<sup>2</sup> It was in San Francisco that Brady was introduced to the theatre, first as an extra in Bartley Campbell's production of The White Slave, and then as stage manager for the Joseph R. Grismer touring troupe.<sup>3</sup> In 1884, in partnership with Lewis Morrison, Brady formed a touring company of his own and produced a pirated version of Faust,<sup>4</sup> followed by a pirated version of Ryder Haggard's She, which he produced in association with George Webster.<sup>5</sup>

William A. Brady was married twice, first in 1891 to Rose Marie Rene, an actress, and then in 1899 to Grace George, also an actress. Brady's first marriage, which ended with the death of Miss Rene in 1896, produced a daughter, Alice. The second marriage, to Miss George, produced a son, William, Jr. The son died in 1935 and Alice, the daughter, died in 1939. William A. Brady retired from active theatrical production in 1940 and died on January 6, 1950, in New York City at the age of eighty-six.<sup>6</sup>

### Career

For purposes of this study, the theatrical career of William A. Brady is divided into three distinct periods of activity, each approximately twenty years in length and corresponding to three distinct phases of his theatrical enterprise. The first period, Brady's early career, covers the period 1889-1909. This was the period in which Brady was involved in establishing himself in the legitimate theatre in New York and in raising capital, through various means, to finance his productions. The second period, 1910-1929, represents the period of Brady's greatest activity in legitimate theatre. In 1910, for instance, Brady became associated with the powerful Shubert Company and, as a result of that association, he was able to increase the quantity of his productions and build the



Playhouse Theatre, his major base of operation. The second period ends with Brady's production of the Elmer Rice drama, Street Scene, and the stock market crash of 1929. The last period, 1930-1950, covers the decline in Brady's production activity and ends with his death in 1950.

### 1889-1909

Brady spent the first twenty years of his New York career producing both legitimate theatre and paratheatric events. This early period is marked by a combination of the two distinct types of activities and interests.

One night he would be coaching some burly pugilist in the ring at Coney Island, and the next giving words of advice and encouragement to some thoroughbred star. He did it all with a level head to business and profit. If bull fighting should suddenly become a popular sport here, you would certainly find Brady importing the first herd of bulls.<sup>7</sup>

The motives behind Brady's boxing matches and other paratheatrical ventures were money and showmanship. For example, Brady stated that he entered the prizefighting field, which he said he hated, "because there was money in it."<sup>8</sup> This mercenary involvement with nonartistic activities served as a means by which Brady was able to support his legitimate Broadway productions.

It should be pointed out, however, that Brady justified his activities outside of the legitimate theatre

with arguments not related to his dramatically oriented ambitions and enterprise. On one occasion he explained the attraction paratheatric events held for him by saying,

. . . my natural combination of recklessness and lack of discretion made me stick my finger into all kinds of pies, both in sport and out of it. After all, it was just showmanship in one form or another. It's impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the theatre and the arena. The fundamentals of getting people to pay money to see something happen are the same in any field.<sup>9</sup>

In the final analysis, however, Brady's primary concern was money or an event's box office receipts. In this respect he did not differ greatly from his contemporaries. During the period 1889-1909 the theatre, as noted in Chapter I, had become Big Business. It was a period in which the success of a production was measured, not by its artistic merit or innovation, but by its profit margin.<sup>10</sup> Given the theatrical producers' general concern with financial success during the era, and Brady's in particular, the bulk of the information included in the subsequent discussion of the early period in Brady's career must of necessity concern financial matters.

The records of Brady's paratheatrical productions are sketchy at best. The bulk of the information concerning them is found in Brady's autobiography. Other information consists of press notices of "broadsword combats refereed by James J. Corbett,"<sup>11</sup> a law suit notice concerning six-day bicycle races,<sup>12</sup> Brady's reenactment of

the Boer War,<sup>13</sup> and, of course, the championship boxing matches of James J. Corbett and James Jeffries, both managed by Brady. The various events, exclusive of the championship fights and the Boer War show, gained Brady profits in excess of \$100,000.<sup>14</sup> Brady estimated that the two boxers, Corbett and Jeffries, brought him additional profits of \$250,000 and \$100,000, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

The tone and spirit of the Brady paratheatrical ventures can be seen in a description of how he staged the reenactment of the Boer War on Coney Island in 1905. That project, his most spectacular, stands as an example of the man's grandiose planning and the extent of his theatrical acumen.

Brady, under the auspices of his Brighton Beach Development Company, the corporation which Brady organized to handle his paratheatric interests, contracted with Captain A. W. Lewis, a British war veteran, to present a reenactment of famous battles of the Boer War for New York audiences. Lewis previously had staged the show at the recent St. Louis Exposition and was seeking another site and sponsorship for his company.

Brady and Orlando Harriman, a New York businessman, developed a seventy-five-acre tract on Coney Island to accommodate the Lewis company's Boer War extravaganza and to provide space for a planned amusement park. The war reenactment took place on a fourteen-acre area containing

a 16,000-seat grandstand which fronted a 1,500-foot-deep "acting" arena.<sup>16</sup> The amusement park occupied the remaining sixty-one acres and was dominated by a mile-long pike, or boardwalk. Lining the pike were free sideshows, games of chance, and various concessions.<sup>17</sup> Brady and Harriman contracted the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Railroad for rail service "right into the amusement grounds."<sup>18</sup> An indication of Brady's flair for the superlative when advertising his projects can be found on the copy he released to describe two of the pike's outstanding features. The items in question were billed as "the biggest roller-coaster in the world" and "the biggest merry-go-round in the world."<sup>19</sup>

The Boer War segment of the project was situated, as noted above, in a large arena. The arena was backed by panoramas representing blockhouses, cliffs, defense lines, and the South African towns of Colenso and Paardeburg. The scale of Brady's investment in this event is suggested by the fact he employed fifty-eight artists to paint the various panoramas. Two large, zinc-lined basins were installed in the lot and equipped with running water to represent two rivers prominent in the battle scenes. Artillery and cavalry drills preceded the four scenes of the play, scenes which involved 1,000 men and 600 horses.<sup>20</sup> Brady even went so far as to hire General Cronje, the Boer hero of the war, for the finale. Cronje brought the show to an end by "riding out in a little wagon to surrender his sword."<sup>21</sup>

Both the Boer War and the amusement park opened on May 27, 1905, with the former playing until Labor Day of that year.<sup>22</sup> The amusement park, intended to be a more permanent attraction than the War show, continued under Brady's direction during his tenure as president and general manager of the Brighton Beach Development Company.<sup>23</sup>

In the period 1889-1909, William A. Brady's legitimate theatrical career involved the production of thirty-four plays, including three revivals of previously produced melodramas, twenty-four new melodramas, four comedies, and three musical comedies. The revivals were productions of Boucicault's After Dark, an all-star cast production of Uncle Tom's Cabin (1901), and a four-performance run of Sardou's Frou Frou in 1902. Brady produced seven of the thirty-four plays in association with other producers. Interestingly, six of the seven were staged in partnership with Joseph R. Grismer, the actor-manager for whom Brady had worked on the West Coast in 1884. The seventh co-produced play, Way Down East, was presented by Brady, Grismer, and Florenz Ziegfeld in 1898.

Brady's New York career began with a production of Dion Boucicault's previously produced melodrama, After Dark. Brady paid Boucicault \$1100 for what he thought were the exclusive rights to the play. Later he learned that Boucicault had neglected to tell him that in 1868, Augustin Daly had successfully sued Boucicault for plagiarizing

portions of After Dark from Daly's Under the Gaslight.<sup>24</sup> Ignorant of the Daly-Boucicault suit, Brady proceeded to open his own production of the play at the People's Theatre, May 20, 1889.<sup>25</sup> The play was a success and Brady produced it at various times in New York for the next seven years.

In spite of the impressive showing his production of After Dark made in New York, it was not a complete personal success for Brady. For one thing, when the show opened, Brady was served with a legal injunction prohibiting further performances of the production. Specifically, Augustin Daly had lodged a suit against Brady in which he reiterated the complaint of copyright infringement he had leveled against Boucicault, the author of After Dark, years earlier. The basis of the complaint was that After Dark contained a scene in which a character is tied to a railroad track, with a locomotive rushing toward him; at the last moment, he is rescued in daring fashion. Daly contended that the scene had been stolen by Boucicault from his play, Under the Gaslight, and that by producing the play Brady was infringing on his (Daly's) literary rights.<sup>26</sup>

Brady and Daly fought the case through the New York state courts and took it to the United States Supreme Court twice. The legal battle lasted thirteen years. Fortunately for Brady, during that lengthy period of

litigation, he was allowed to continue producing After Dark. Brady eventually lost the case and Daly was awarded a judgement of \$61,000. Because of the length of time the litigation was in progress, however, the statute of limitations went into effect and Brady was required to pay only \$6,000 of that judgement.<sup>27</sup> Considering the profits Brady had realized from the After Dark productions he had staged during the long court battle, that \$6,000 judgement represented only a very small penalty. In fact, in 1903 Brady estimated that during the run of the production he had made approximately \$75,000 over and above his legal expenses. Daly's expenses, on the other hand, were estimated to be \$50,000.<sup>28</sup>

In evaluating the factors involved in Brady's legal struggle over the production rights to After Dark, it should be noted that the significance of the Brady-Daly case to American theatre was more important than the money involved. It was a landmark case in the long history of American copyright law in that the case reaffirmed an 1868 ruling which stated that a situation within a play (in this instance, the contested railroad scene) was copyrightable.<sup>29</sup> Further, the long-term result of the dispute illustrated the differences existing between statutory copyrights and common law copyrights. For example, in the years following the resolution of the court case, Daly's statutory copyright to Under the

Gaslight expired; Brady, however, had purchased common law rights to After Dark and those rights were perpetual. As a result, as late as the 1930s, Brady was collecting royalties on road company productions of After Dark "to the tune of something in five figures."<sup>30</sup>

The controversial production of After Dark also marked the beginning of Brady's partnership with James J. Corbett. The play contained a sparring scene for which Brady hired Corbett. Brady was impressed by Corbett's boxing ability and began touting him as a contender for the world heavyweight championship, then held by John L. Sullivan. The astute Brady became Corbett's manager and arranged the championship match which ended in Sullivan's defeat.

Immediately after the championship fight Brady began exploiting the financial potential of Corbett's new title. That exploitation ranged from the sale of franchises to produce paperweights made from plaster casts of Corbett's fists,<sup>31</sup> to the production of specially written plays in which the pugilist appeared as the star.

The first of the plays Brady had commissioned for Corbett was Gentleman Jack, by Charles T. Vincent. The play opened November 7, 1892, at the Grand Opera House in New York.<sup>32</sup> Brady then took Corbett on an exhibition tour of Europe, during which he produced Gentleman Jack at London's Drury Lane theatre.<sup>33</sup> The London production,



like the majority of subsequent performances of the play throughout Europe, was a box-office failure. As Brady put it,

We ran only five weeks with a net loss of £1,500. The English public was fight-minded enough. They'd stand around and gape at the man who had licked Charley Mitchell as blatantly as any yokels at an Iowa railroad depot. But they wouldn't pay money to see him in action on the stage. We went touring all over England and Scotland, and the only places we did any business were Liverpool and Glasgow, where American seamen had broken in the inhabitants to American ideas. Even in Birmingham . . . we drew only £300 in eight performances.<sup>34</sup>

Corbett remained under Brady's management until 1897.<sup>35</sup> During their association Corbett was starred in three Brady productions: Gentleman Jack, A Naval Cadet, and A Man Among Men. The boxer also officiated or made appearances at various Brady projects such as cake walks, six-day bicycle races and broadsword combats.<sup>36</sup> Brady estimated his profits from his association with Corbett at approximately \$250,000.

Within two years after Brady had arrived in New York he had established a reputation as a successful producer who was honest, sincere and straightforward.<sup>38</sup> By 1891, he had imported two English melodramas, Humanity and The Cotton King, which were lauded as "the best-written, best-conceived, and most naturally effective melodramas" seen in New York "in recent years."<sup>39</sup> In

1891, Brady also bought the out-of-town rights to the dramatization of DuMaurier's Trilby from A. M. Palmer. The Trilby negotiations serve as a prime example of Brady's business acumen in that Brady paid Palmer, who mistakenly thought the script was a worthless property, \$20,000 in advance and guaranteed him an additional twenty percent of the production's gross receipts. Brady not only promptly sent six road companies of Trilby on tour, but since he had purchased the rights to the script, he proceeded to charge Palmer a fee for Palmer's own English and Australian productions of the play.<sup>40</sup> Although Brady paid Palmer \$57,000 in royalties in the course of a seven-month period, the production was so successful that he was able to realize a \$50,000 profit on the venture.<sup>41</sup>

The most valuable property acquired during the 1889-1909 period was Lottie Blair Parker's Way Down East, originally titled Annie Laurie. In this instance, Brady, James Corbett, Joseph Grismer, and Florenz Ziegfeld had equal shares in the play which they purchased for a mere \$5,000. Corbett and Brady dissolved their partnership by mutual, informal agreement prior to the production of Way Down East and, as a result of the property settlement, Brady obtained Corbett's twenty-five percent interest in the play.<sup>42</sup> In his negotiations for rights to this dramatic property, Brady arranged to pay Mrs. Parker "up to \$10,000" in royalties "for permission to change the title

and juggle with it [the play] until it was theatrically satisfactory."<sup>43</sup>

Joseph Grismer and Mrs. Parker worked on the script of Way Down East for almost two years prior to its New York opening, January 19, 1898. Grismer's contribution to the script was primarily his working knowledge of popular theatrical fare and public taste. He invented and patented a mechanical snowstorm especially for the play and added another character to the script. The new character was suggested by the "small town hick" character that the performer Harry Seamon had popularized in his vaudeville act. Seamon, who played that stock character role for the Brady production, was given an entrance line that set the tone for the entire play:

Big doin's in town—pust-office bruk into  
and robbed last night—gret loss fer th'  
guv'mint—three dollars wuth o' stamps  
stole!<sup>44</sup>

The folk humor evident in the Seamon line was combined with what came to be a stereotypical American melodrama plot. The story concerned the trials and tribulations of Anna Moore, a young woman trapped into a fake marriage by a scoundrel, and turned out into a New England blizzard when found to be an unwed mother. The climax of the piece is equally stereotypical inasmuch as Anna is rescued by a young hero who leaps across dangerous ice floes and snatches Anna from the edge of a raging waterfall.

Brady's selection of Way Down East and his faith in it was justified by what he termed a national "popular interest in . . . Nature."<sup>45</sup> Brady elaborated on his use of the term "Nature" by saying,

The popular mind had been turned to thoughts of the country, of green and growing things, of the ploughshare and the freshly turned earth, of early rising and early retiring, of all things that make up the state known as "truly rural." . . . the glories and delights of a farmer's life.<sup>46</sup>

Such thoughts were the guiding principles when Parker and Grismer fashioned the play in such a way as to capitalize on the folk humor, sentiment, and public interest in "pastoral drama" or "rural drama."<sup>47</sup>

The appeal of the popular ingredients in Way Down East was evidenced by the touring performance record of the show. Way Down East opened January 19, 1898, at the Manhattan Theatre in New York and ran until June 18 of that year.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, the play's six-month Manhattan run did not include a single profitable week.<sup>49</sup> The production was kept on stage, however, so that a "long New York run" could be advertised when the play was sent out on the road.<sup>50</sup> Brady's strategy in this instance apparently paid off inasmuch as the tour following the New York engagement was a financial success and, on the strength of it, the show was returned to New York on October 16, 1898.<sup>51</sup> The second New York appearance lasted seven months, at various theatres, and the average box-office profit was \$10,000 per week.<sup>52</sup>

Way Down East became, in spite of its limited New York success, one of Brady's most profitable and most frequently produced plays. In 1903, Brady estimated his share of the profits, to that date, to be \$350,000.<sup>53</sup> The play's capacity to draw was far from exhausted at that point and it continued to be produced in cities across the United States for almost twenty-one years.<sup>54</sup> By 1915, when Brady released the play for general amateur and professional production, touring companies had furnished Brady with approximately \$1,000,000 in profits. Then, in 1920, D. W. Griffith paid Brady \$175,000 for the motion picture rights to Way Down East<sup>56</sup> and later, in 1934, when a talking picture version of the play was produced, Brady received an additional \$50,000.<sup>57</sup>

The widespread and enduring success of Way Down East, known as "Brady's Bread and Butter," furnished Brady with known profits (those gained from Brady's personal productions and the sales of motion picture rights) of approximately \$1,575,000.

By 1906, the legitimate theatre had become Brady's main interest. That shift of interest was due, in part, to the fact that he had given up the management of prize-fights at the insistence of his second wife, Grace George,<sup>58</sup> and he had completed his Boer War production on Coney Island. In 1906, as Brady began to concentrate his energies on the production of plays, he recorded two significant

achievements. He produced The Man of the Hour, which became the longest running play of his early career, and a drama entitled The Redskin, which was possibly one of his most interesting plays.

The Man of the Hour, by George Broadhurst, was produced by Brady and Grismer at the Savoy Theatre in New York, December 4, 1906.<sup>59</sup> Broadhurst's play dealt with the reform of corrupt political conditions, which supposedly existed in all large American cities, and the conflicts that are generated when young, idealistic reformers are pitted against powerful political bosses.<sup>60</sup> While the play ran for 479 performances,<sup>61</sup> the unusual aspect of the production was not the length of its run. Its uniqueness stemmed from the manner in which it was introduced and scheduled. Although the production's run is associated with the Savoy Theatre, Brady and Grismer had presented The Man of the Hour in New York prior to its opening at the Savoy. Brady, who had another production (Clothes) on the Manhattan Theatre stage in October, produced The Man of the Hour as a matinee show at that theatre during the run of his regular production. Under Brady's novel scheme, his production of Clothes played every night and Saturday afternoons at the Manhattan, while The Man of the Hour played there each afternoon, Monday through Friday. Since the Saturday performance of Clothes prevented a continuous series of performances of

The Man of the Hour, Brady moved that production to "the suburbs and upState" New York on Saturday afternoons and evenings.<sup>62</sup> That arrangement continued until the play opened in its own theatre, the Savoy, in December.

A road company of The Man of the Hour added to the play's unusual history. The company began its tour in August, 1906, and enjoyed profitable business for almost two months. Business fell off sharply, however, as the company travelled through the southern and mid-Western states. Consequently, as the company approached the Pacific Coast area, Brady and Grismer had to make a decision as to whether the company should be called back to New York in order to avoid greater financial loss. Brady wanted the company to stay on tour, but Grismer did not. The two men reportedly flipped a coin to settle the issue and Brady won. The gamble paid off and the company took in approximately \$100,000 in the course of the season.<sup>63</sup>

Brady's second noteworthy production in 1906, The Redskin, by Donald MacLaren, opened at the Liberty Theatre, March 1.<sup>64</sup> The production combined the showmanship Brady had evidenced in his Boer War production with that ability to gauge public taste previously noted in his handling of Way Down East and The Man of the Hour. The play, billed as a "Western melodrama," capitalized on the public interest in President Theodore Roosevelt's adventurous image.<sup>65</sup> The play, which dealt with the

selection of a husband for an Indian princess, presented a romanticized and popular picture of "wild west." The western flavor of the play was enhanced by the fact that Brady hired ten Sioux Indians to perform a "Ghost Dance" on stage. To add to this spectacular bit of local color, Brady negotiated with the U.S. Department of the Interior for the authorization needed to bring the Indians to New York from the Rosebud Agency in Nebraska.<sup>66</sup>

The Redskin was not a success in spite of Brady's publicity and showmanship. It ran only twenty-six performances.<sup>67</sup> The critical reception of the play was poor despite Brady's avowed purpose of presenting "an American play by an American boy in an American theatre."<sup>68</sup>

The general tone of the critics' comments on the play was termed "flippant" by Brady. Moreover, he charged that the critics were in the habit of going "to first nights and [they] resort to any phrase or sentence of ridicule to obtain a laugh from their readers."<sup>69</sup> As a result of the reviews given The Redskin, Brady turned to the press and took issue with the New York dramatic critics. That battle with the press actually began when Brady stepped before the curtain of the Liberty stage and delivered a speech attacking the critics for their "flippancy."<sup>70</sup> While that speech, and two subsequent speeches delivered from the Liberty stage, are covered in more detail in a later chapter of this study, it should be



be noted that Brady used the issue to his advantage. Although Brady appeared to be "unmistakably sincere"<sup>71</sup> in the speech, stating that he was "about to do something which even my warmest friends have pleaded with me not to do,"<sup>72</sup> the significant fact is that his play received widespread publicity for more than a week as a result of his public complaint. Brady kept the controversy, and the public's interest in it, alive by delivering the two additional speeches<sup>73</sup> mentioned above, and by writing an open letter to William Winter, drama critic for the New York Tribune. The producer's letter, which accused Winter of writing a derogatory review of The Redskin while under the influence of "a splenetic spirit," was printed in the Tribune, along with Winter's reply that Brady, in making his anti-critic speech, had "made a fool of himself."<sup>74</sup> Brady's letter and Winter's caustic reply, both cited in a later chapter, resulted in half a page of valuable publicity for The Redskin.<sup>75</sup>

In the early years of his career, Brady managed his wife's stage career in addition to his staging of paratheatrical events and Broadway plays. That managerial undertaking was approached, like his other activities, with an eye to possible profit and the Brady flair for showmanship. Brady saw Miss Grace George as a "property" which he hoped would show a profit.<sup>76</sup> Miss George was, with her consent and support, groomed by Brady to be a

Broadway star in the tradition of Mrs. Fiske, Annie Russell, and Henrietta Crosman.<sup>77</sup> In the course of her career, Miss George appeared in twenty-three Brady-produced Broadway plays. It is interesting to note, at this point, that eight of those productions were presented during the first period of Brady's career.

Between 1900 and 1909, the final portion of Brady's early theatrical period, he worked to establish Grace George as a star of the New York stage. According to T. A. Brown, the earliest record of a starring role for Miss George was in the Brady production of Mlle. Fifi at Miner's Fifth Avenue Theatre, February 7, 1900.<sup>78</sup> Although Mlle. Fifi was a "complete failure" financially,<sup>79</sup> Brady gave Miss George additional starring roles in this early portion of his career. They were Frou Frou (1902), Pretty Peggy (1903), and Clothes (1906). Of the three productions only one, Pretty Peggy, was financially successful; it showed a modest profit of \$27,000.<sup>80</sup>

According to Brady, the lack of financial success of productions in which he starred Grace George caused rumors to spread and his judgement to be questioned. Brady averred that many thought he had given Miss George roles in his plays primarily because she was his wife.

While I was reputed to be losing bushels of money on Miss George all the wiseacres in New York told me that I was letting my heart rule my head. They predicted that I would ruin myself simply because I loved my wife.<sup>81</sup>

Brady refuted the rumors by insisting that Miss George, as an actress, was a speculative, but "safe," investment. The whole object of her appearances, Brady said, was to introduce Miss George to the general public and establish her as a star. That, he said, would give Miss George more artistic freedom in the future.<sup>82</sup> Brady admitted that Miss George had not been as successful as she might have been, but he predicted that her future career would bring him a 600 percent return on his initial investment.<sup>83</sup>

On one occasion, Brady asked an interviewer to negate the rumors that he was irresponsibly spending money on Miss George.

I do wish that you'd tell folks that I'm not a lovesick fool, wasting my time on Miss George, because she happens to be my wife. It makes me tired to hear people saying, "Oh, Billy Brady's blowing his money on that wife of his." It is absolutely absurd. It is unjust to both of us, and—I don't like it.<sup>84</sup>

In the course of the interview, Brady went on to state his primary reasons for starring his wife. He insisted,

I am starring her because I believe she is a fine actress . . . I have the greatest faith in her—as an actress . . . Why last Saturday night Pretty Peggy played to more money than any other attraction in New York.<sup>85</sup>

As indicated earlier, by the end of Brady's early career he was firmly established as a producer of legitimate Broadway plays and was no longer required to rely on paratheatrical ventures for financial support.

It is at that point, 1909, that Brady entered what has been labelled, for the purposes of this study, his period of greatest activity.

### 1910-1929

The nineteen-year interval between 1910 and 1929 represents the period during which William A. Brady became one of the leading theatrical producers in the United States, the owner of a major New York theatre, and a producer acclaimed for both his business skill and artistic insight. The paratheatrical activity, so prevalent in his early career, was almost nonexistent during the middle period of his career. Other than a short term as director of a major motion picture studio, Brady devoted this period of his career almost exclusively to the legitimate theatre and its business. It might be argued that proof of the results of that concentrated effort are to be found in the fact that his production record for the period is marked by the presentation of his longest-running and most critically acclaimed production. That play, Elmer Rice's Street Scene, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1929 and ran 600 performances.

The following discussion of Brady's career (1910-1929) deals primarily with his rise to prominence as a producer in the legitimate New York theatre. Although Brady continued to be vitally interested in the business

of the theatre, the financial matters emphasized in the discussion of his early years do not assume a comparable degree of importance in a review of the middle portion of his career. Instead it becomes essential to shift attention to those activities which served to establish Brady as a leading producer of the era. While the information available on Brady's activities between 1910 and 1929 includes financial data, the major portion of that information involves factors which Brady came to regard as important as his profit margins. To illustrate, in 1916, Brady referred to that shift in emphasis by saying,

When a man has reached fifty he acquires a true sense of values. At least the true man does. He cares more for his family, more for his standing in the community, more for words of genuine commendation from the worthy.<sup>86</sup>

The most important event in Brady's career, in terms of personal advantage and the impact it had on American theatre, occurred on April 19, 1910. That date marked the beginning of a business alliance between William A. Brady and the Shubert Theatrical Company. The merger was aimed primarily at combating the monopolistic power of the Theatrical Syndicate. As pointed out in Chapter I, prior to 1910, the Theatrical Syndicate controlled a majority of the theatres across the United States, and was rivaled only by the Shuberts and a few independent producers.

By 1910, however, the Shubert Company had become a serious threat to the Syndicate and it required only the full cooperation of a few more independent producers to effectively dislodge the Syndicate. Brady's agreement with the Shuberts provided the additional influence and houses the Shuberts needed to begin to destroy the power of the Syndicate.<sup>87</sup>

Brady's relations with the Syndicate, prior to his joining the Shuberts, had not been entirely amiable. Although Brady had leased Syndicate theatres for some of his productions,<sup>88</sup> he was outspoken in his opinions of Syndicate business methods and openly critical of some of the Syndicate corporate directors. The Syndicate, in Brady's opinion, was harmful to American theatre because it eliminated "the old idea of wholesome competition— as a result we have a paucity of plays and productions."<sup>89</sup> Brady did not go so far as to charge that the Syndicate "pressed anybody out of business,"<sup>90</sup> but he asserted that the control of stage production by "a few big men" caused "suppression of the young brain, with a subsequent lack of originality among the dramatists."<sup>91</sup>

Brady criticized Charles Frohman, one of the corporate officers of the Syndicate, for his lack of originality. Specifically, Brady charged that, with the Syndicate resources supporting him, Frohman (and by implication the other Syndicate producers) neglected new dramatists.

Brady called Frohman

the principal imitator in the theatrical business . . . In all of his career he has shown less originality, has developed fewer original ideas than any other man who produces plays on a large scale . . . He has notoriously neglected the young American dramatist, producing native plays only when by [sic] authors of established reputation.<sup>92</sup>

Brady went on to charge that Frohman further hurt the American theatre by using Syndicate resources "to tie up under contracts . . . young playwrights" who had been discovered and developed by independent producers and "whom he would not have risked a cent to develop."<sup>93</sup>

The animosity that existed between Brady and A. L. Erlanger, another officer in the Syndicate, became something of a theatrical legend.

These two men usually oppose one another, greatly increasing the working hours of sundry lawyers and confirming the ancient adage that there are two sides to every question. If Mr. Erlanger thinks it will rain today, Mr. Brady can see a long dry spell ahead. If Mr. Brady opines that the public taste is shifting to the serious drama, Mr. Erlanger begins to make contracts for comic operas.<sup>94</sup>

The two men involved each other in minor and major law suits on such a regular basis that Leander Richardson humorously observed:

Several court justices feel that they cannot go on their vacations without assurances from counsel for both Mr. Brady and Mr. Erlanger that they will start no further litigation against each other until the mills of justice have a fair chance to grind out some other business.<sup>95</sup>

The merger of Brady's theatrical interests with those of the Shuberts was primarily a business operation, but there also appeared to be a much more amiable relationship between the Shuberts and Brady than had existed between Brady and the Syndicate. Evidence of the compatible working relationship between Brady and the Shubert organization can be found in the fact that, as late as 1939, Brady was co-producing plays with the Shubert company.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, in 1929, the Shuberts loaned Brady enough money to produce Street Scene, a show which the Shuberts had previously rejected.<sup>97</sup>

The articles of incorporation which formed the Brady-Shubert alliance created a theatrical company known as William A. Brady, Incorporated. The officers of the new company were Brady, president, Lee Shubert, vice-president, and J. J. Shubert, secretary-treasurer.<sup>98</sup> The company's plans included the building of two theatres in New York City and the implementation of "the open door policy throughout the United States."<sup>99</sup> Brady said that the terms of the agreement gave him

a chance to do things in the producing line that I have always earnestly wished for. My operations are no longer to be restricted, and I can play companies in which I am directly or indirectly interested where I please. Besides this, the large capitalization of the company gives me unlimited cash to operate with.<sup>100</sup>

Brady further stated that the alliance would aid him in



challenging the Syndicate's refusal to allow independent producers access to Syndicate theatres. With the Shubert resources available to him, Brady was convinced that legal cases against the Syndicate could be taken "if necessary, to the Supreme Court of the United States."<sup>101</sup>

The immediate results of the Shubert-Brady merger were twofold. First, Brady's longtime business associate, Joseph R. Grismer, was unwilling to become involved in the increased production activity he thought the merger would mean and, as a result, sold all his theatrical interests to Brady for an undisclosed figure and retired.<sup>102</sup>

The second consequence of the merger was revealed in an announcement by Marc Klaw on behalf of the Syndicate. Klaw, in reply to Brady's avowed intention to challenge the Syndicate's closed-door policy, stated that Brady's attractions would not be allowed in any Syndicate theatre. In addition, Klaw said that Brady's threat to take cases against the Syndicate to the Supreme Court was meaningless. In his words,

The courts of this country all the way up to the last tribunal have decided that a manager can keep anybody he pleases out of the front of his theatre, even if the fellow pays money. If we can keep one fellow out of the front door what is to prevent us from keeping a whole company out of the stage entrance?<sup>103</sup>

Although such press dispatches continued to be released by the Syndicate offices, Brady's action in joining the Shuberts "turned the tide" against the

Syndicate and by May, 1910, 1,425 theatres around the country had endorsed open-door policies similar to that of the Shuberts.<sup>104</sup> Such defections from the Syndicate camp were indicative of a long battle which, while significant, was one that could not be won quickly. While Brady's alliance with the Shuberts provided him relief from Syndicate competition and pressures, there are other aspects of the Brady-Shubert merger that warrant consideration.

Having established a working partnership, Brady and the Shuberts jointly produced several plays. The first of these joint productions was a revival of The Mikado, presented May 30, 1910, at the Shuberts' Casino Theatre.<sup>105</sup> Then, in 1911, Brady and the Shuberts produced two additional shows, H. M. S. Pinafore and Bunty Pulls the Strings.<sup>106</sup> In 1912, the number of joint Brady-Shubert productions increased to four with the production of revivals of Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas. The first joint production of 1912, Patience, played thirty-two performances at the Lyric Theatre.<sup>107</sup> The other three, The Pirates of Penzance, H. M. S. Pinafore, and The Mikado, all played at the Shubert's Casino Theatre.<sup>108</sup> The last three productions represented a Brady-Shubert attempt to establish a permanent comic opera repertory company. The company, which included Brady's daughter, Alice, was to produce the plays in rotation, with each play running no

more than two consecutive performances. At the very outset the producers deviated from their avowed policy and the first production, The Pirates of Penzance, ran twenty-eight performances. The plan for a comic opera repertory organization encountered a general lack of public interest, however, and the project was abandoned for the season after The Mikado closed on June 29, 1912.<sup>109</sup> Despite the lack of success with the Gilbert and Sullivan properties, Brady did not relinquish his interest in the project and he and the Shuberts attempted a similar enterprise in 1913. For this second effort, the original plan was amended to allow each play to run as long as the box office receipts were acceptable. Thus, in 1913, Brady and the Shuberts produced four comic operas at the Casino Theatre for a total run of ninety-seven performances. The productions consisted of The Beggar Student by Karl Millocker, and Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado, H. M. S. Pinafore, and Iolanthe.<sup>110</sup>

Interesting as the aforementioned attempt at comic opera may have been, perhaps the most permanent result of Brady's affiliation with the Shuberts was the construction of Brady's Playhouse Theatre. The capital investment of the merger, provided largely by the Shuberts, was approximately \$1,000,000.<sup>111</sup> Part of that money was to be used to finance the construction of two theatres in the New York theatre district. One of the theatres, the New Netherlands,

was to be a large house "suitable for spectacles, big melodramas, pantomimes and similar shows."<sup>112</sup> The other theatre, to be called the New Booth, was to be "small and adapted for plays which must be seen at close range."<sup>113</sup>

The actual financing and construction of the theatres was accomplished under the auspices of the New Netherlands Theatre Company, jointly owned by Brady and E. Clarence Jones, a wealthy banker.<sup>114</sup> Only one of the two planned theatres, a compromise design incorporating a large seating capacity in a somewhat intimate arrangement, was constructed, and it was named The Playhouse rather than the New Netherlands.<sup>115</sup> The purchase of the site, at 137 West 48th Street, and the construction of the theatre entailed a cost of more than \$400,000. Reportedly, Brady and Jones "swung the deal with about \$50,000 cash."<sup>116</sup> Such financial maneuvering was similar to that which accompanied other projects Brady speaks of in his autobiography.<sup>117</sup>

The location Brady picked for his new Playhouse Theatre was considered by some to be too far north of the main theatre district. Many wondered if people would travel the extra distance to see a play.<sup>118</sup> Brady's gamble on the site paid off, however, and The Playhouse provided the owners with an average yearly income of \$100,000 for the next ten years.<sup>119</sup>

Once again, The Playhouse became the base of operations for Brady's theatrical enterprise and remained so until his retirement in 1940. The Playhouse was a brick structure containing the theatre, dressing rooms, a scenery shop, and office space. The theatre itself consisted of an orchestra, a balcony, and a gallery arranged in a shallow design which allowed all seating to be "very near to the stage, so that audience and players will be in close sympathy."<sup>120</sup> The stage was "large and fitted with every appliance known to modern stagecraft,"<sup>121</sup> including electrically controlled curtains.<sup>122</sup> The floor above the auditorium housed a suite of offices for Brady, the office of the general manager, the booking office, the press room, and the financial office. The third floor of the building contained rehearsal studios.

From its construction until Brady's retirement, The Playhouse housed the majority of Brady's New York productions. During the mid-portion of his career (1910-1929) Brady produced forty-three plays in The Playhouse and, in his final active years (1930-1940), he staged seventeen of his twenty productions at The Playhouse. According to Elmer Rice, Brady's choice of The Playhouse for the majority of his productions derived from the fact that, by doing so, he was able to receive both a producer's and a theatre owner's share of any show's profits.<sup>124</sup>

The volume of plays Brady produced at The Playhouse was, in part, the result of a novel corporate structure he devised for the operation of the theatre. In 1910, during the construction of the theatre, Brady and E. Clarence Jones had organized a second corporation, The Playhouse Company, for the purpose of leasing The Playhouse from the New Netherlands Theatre Company for a term of ten years at an annual rate of \$40,000. In addition to the annual rent, The Playhouse Company agreed to pay the taxes levied against the theatre, interest on mortgages, and "other fixed charges in connection with the property."<sup>125</sup> The agreement made William A. Brady both lessor and lessee of The Playhouse Theatre and charged him with managing the house and "arranging its theatrical policy."<sup>126</sup>

The arrangement between Brady and Jones was apparently satisfactory to both men during the ten years of operation stipulated in the charter agreement. In July, 1920, however, Jones attempted to oust Brady from his position.<sup>127</sup> Jones' action was made possible by the fact that The Playhouse Company's ten-year lease on The Playhouse Theatre was to be renewed in December of that year (1920). At that time, an individual named A. O. Brown offered to lease The Playhouse from the New Netherlands corporation for a term of five years at \$60,000 per year. Allegedly Brown worked for Jones and

was acting as Jones' agent in what was an obvious attempt, by Jones, to gain sole control of both the New Netherlands and The Playhouse companies. To counter Jones' threat, Brady offered the New Netherlands corporation \$62,000 per year for a five-year lease on The Playhouse property. The Brady offer was accepted by the New Netherlands Board of Directors and, momentarily, his base of operations and authority appeared secure.<sup>128</sup>

When Brady's offer was accepted, Jones instituted legal proceedings to dissolve both the New Netherlands and The Playhouse Corporations.<sup>129</sup> Jones argued that he was dissatisfied with Brady's control of The Playhouse and he charged that Brady did "nothing but produce his own plays there."<sup>130</sup> Further, Jones averred that attempts to sell his half-interest (500 shares) in the New Netherlands Theatre Company had been unsuccessful because of Brady's "poor management of the Playhouse theatre."<sup>131</sup> Brady's attorney, in seeking an injunction restraining Jones from dissolving the corporations, stated,

It is apparent that the act of Jones in opposing the signing of the lease by the corporation and in bringing the dissolution proceeding against the corporation [is] inspired solely and only by pique, obstinacy and general dissatisfaction; and that his application to this court is not made in good faith.<sup>132</sup>

The court granted the injunction after learning that, as result of Brady's management of The Playhouse, and

contrary to Jones' assertions, the New Netherlands Corporation "had assets, over and above its liabilities, amounting to \$500,000."<sup>133</sup>

Jones' unsuccessful challenge represents the only recorded threat to Brady's control of The Playhouse. Brady was, as a result of the law suit, in complete control of that theatre until his retirement from active production in 1940.

During the height of William A. Brady's production activity at The Playhouse, and prior to the Jones' challenge to Brady's ownership of that theatre, Brady extended his interests to the motion picture industry. This move was a logical one for Brady inasmuch as he had been moderately involved in the motion picture industry since its beginnings, having sold his stage plays to late nineteenth century filmmakers for use as story plots for movies.<sup>134</sup> It was not until 1915, however, that he became involved in the industry seriously. Brady said that his hesitance to enter the picture industry was caused by a perceived lack of financial promise in the area. He demonstrated his typical business acumen by waiting until the industry began to show mass appeal and financial promise and then going "head over ears into pictures as soon as they began to look like big-time stuff."<sup>135</sup>

Brady's involvement in motion pictures represented a reversal in philosophy for the man who was once labelled



"the man who hated motion pictures the deadliest."<sup>136</sup> That label was not undeserved inasmuch as, as late as 1912, Brady had thought films were the greatest rival legitimate theatre faced, and he had denounced the entire motion picture industry as being cheap plagiarists of the stage.<sup>137</sup> Reportedly, Brady had once even warned Broadway actors working for him that "association with any studio meant immediate dismissal" and he had threatened to sue "the moving picture magnates for using his own ideas."<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, throughout his work in films, Brady insisted that the movies harmed stage actors. It was his contention that acting in silent films caused actors to lose the vocal control needed for the legitimate theatre.<sup>139</sup> Brady's attitude toward motion pictures was not severe enough, however, to prevent his involvement in the production aspects of that industry once he saw that a profit could be made.

Brady was appointed President of the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry in 1915, a title he held until 1922,<sup>140</sup> and was hired the following year (1916) by World Films Corporation. World Films appointed Brady its director general at an annual salary of \$100,000.<sup>141</sup> The appointment required that Brady reduce his legitimate theatre activities to the extent that he produced only three plays on Broadway in 1916<sup>142</sup> and one in 1917.<sup>143</sup>

When Brady joined World Films he applied his theatrical showmanship and knowledge to the production and distribution of motion pictures, just as he had done on his other paratheatrical projects such as the Boer War show and the promotion of Gentleman Jim Corbett. In his agreement with World Films, Brady was given total authority over all pictures released by the company, an arrangement similar to that he had made with E. Clarence Jones in regard to the operation of The Playhouse theatre. While Brady worked for the World Films Corporation, each film released was to carry the label, "World Films, Brady-Made,"<sup>144</sup> and a film could be released only at a date approved by Brady.<sup>145</sup> In approving a film for release, Brady utilized the same managerial or artistic procedures he employed when producing legitimate dramas for the New York stage. He purposely delayed the release of each film until he had personally edited flaws from it. That practice, Brady said, was the result of advice he had received from one of the leading playwrights of the theatre.

The late Dion Boucicault . . . once told me that as soon as he finished a manuscript he locked it in a drawer and busied himself with something else for a full month, so that when he took up his play again he was able to perceive defects which he almost surely would have overlooked while in the spirit of his work. The Boucicault system applies perfectly to the preparation of motion pictures.<sup>146</sup>

Brady adhered to that advice and passed it, along with other theatrical knowledge, on to World Film exhibitors. The expertise he provided the young film industry covered a wide range of practical areas. For example, letters sent from Brady's office advised exhibitors on methods of determining the length of time any one film could profitably play in a given area, the most effective means of advertising films, and methods of audience analysis.<sup>147</sup> For example Brady emphasized the importance of advance publicity to the promotion of every picture. Further, Brady specifically compared the exhibition of motion pictures to the promotion of stage plays by writing an exhibitor the following:

Your theatre is in a city that was known in the days of travelling shows as a three-night stand. You need not have waited for me to point out that a city which formerly supported expensive theatrical combinations for half a week at a time cannot take ample care of a comparatively trifling cost picture for the same period. You have been simply making a one-night stand out of a perfectly good three-day city . . . You have accomplished this net result by following customs set by others, instead of thinking for yourself. . . . It is an infallible proposition of all show business that the attraction draws the money, and not the theatre, but because of what is in the theatre, and . . . the exhibitor . . . must get out and hustle for greater patronage.<sup>148</sup>

On one occasion, Brady stated that his conduct of World Films was based on "showmanship," which he defined as "first securing good shows and then exploiting them for the last ounce that is in them."<sup>149</sup>

The success of Brady's career in motion pictures is made apparent by the fact that, during his first year with World Films (1917), he had released thirty-seven major pictures.<sup>150</sup> His prominence in the industry was further indicated by the fact that, in that same year (1917), he was commissioned to mobilize the movie industry in World War I.

Brady was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson "to organize the motion picture industry in such a manner as to establish direct and authoritative co-operation with the Committee on Public Information."<sup>151</sup> Although Brady was a logical choice for the position by virtue of his work with World Films, it should be pointed out that he had been a personal friend and "consistent and influential supporter" of Wilson for many years.<sup>152</sup> Brady had also established his identity to the Wilson regime by demonstrating the persuasive and emotional power of motion pictures at the time of the President's second inauguration. During that inauguration, Brady had filmed the entire ceremony and distributed the film throughout the United States via the facilities of World Films.<sup>153</sup>

In giving Brady his war assignment, it was Wilson's intention to have Brady supervise the "dissemination of public intelligence" and present "America's plans and purposes" through the use of the motion picture medium.<sup>154</sup> In at least one instance that duty required that Brady

supervise a vast shipment of film to Europe to be used in counter propaganda efforts against the Germans.

One day Washington called for 2,500,000 million [sic] feet of film immediately for emergency use across the water. Presumably, this great quantity had to be shipped in a week. Actually, it was all shipped in twenty-four hours.<sup>155</sup>

The opportunities to utilize his showmanship and theatrical expertise in such a growing and powerful medium caused Brady to discard the low opinion he originally had of motion pictures. By the end of his involvement in the industry, Brady lauded motion pictures as the "savior of the world" because of their influence on public opinion during the first World War. Further, because of the elimination of language barriers in silent films, Brady called them "the first answer to the Tower of Babel; the Universal Language."<sup>156</sup>

Regardless of Brady's high opinion of motion pictures, he was cautious in his approach to the financial aspects of the industry. By 1919, Brady was of the opinion that investors in the film industry were headed for disaster. He contended that the industry had overextended itself by producing too many films.<sup>157</sup> At about the same time Brady began referring to himself as "primarily a theatrical producer"<sup>158</sup> and, by August, 1919, he had returned to the Broadway theatre in order to personally supervise his production of Owen Davis' melodrama,

At 9:45, which had opened June 28th of that year at The Playhouse.<sup>159</sup>

Brady did not enjoy great success as a theatrical producer upon his return to Broadway. From 1919 until he produced Street Scene in 1929, William A. Brady presented twenty-eight productions in New York City.<sup>160</sup> In spite of the number of productions he staged, only ten of those plays could be considered successful with engagements of more than 100 performances, the arbitrary standard of success used by the trade papers in the twenties.<sup>161</sup> Fifteen of the twenty-eight plays ran less than fifty performances.<sup>162</sup> The most successful Brady production of the 1919-1929 period, prior to Street Scene, was Up She Goes which played 265 performances in 1922.<sup>163</sup> Up She Goes, by Frank Craven, was one of the few musical comedies produced by Brady. The musical, a story of a young couple's attempts to build their own house, owed much of its success to the fact that it was produced during a theatrical season dominated by musical comedies and musical revues.<sup>164</sup>

Brady's producing organization suffered a loss of effectiveness during the late 1920s and his reputation as a producer declined considerably. His absence from the Broadway scene during his involvement in motion pictures caused the theatre industry to focus attention on other members of the Brady household, namely Brady's wife, Grace George, and his two children, William Jr. and Alice,

all of whom had made considerable progress in their own theatrical careers. As Brady put it, the theatre industry "had me dead and buried"<sup>165</sup> once the Brady producing staff had been reduced and the major income source had become The Playhouse.<sup>166</sup>

A major contributing factor to Brady's decline as a producer was his alcoholism. Although no specific reason for the condition is ever cited, the effects of it were apparently well-known within the theatre industry as early as 1924.<sup>167</sup> Jo Mielziner, the scene designer for Brady's 1924 production of That Awful Mrs. Eaton and for Street Scene in 1929, described Brady as often raging and ranting during rehearsals after "indulging in liquid refreshments."<sup>168</sup> Helen Hayes, who had worked for Brady in 1926 and 1927 in What Every Woman Knows, also remembered being amazed at the amount of work Brady was able to accomplish in spite of his drinking problems.<sup>169</sup> Further, Elmer Rice, in his discussion of production problems connected to Street Scene, stated that, although Brady abstained from alcohol during the rehearsal period of the play, he reverted to it shortly after the play opened. According to Rice, Brady was then "in and out of a private sanitarium" so often that business meetings had to be scheduled at the sanitarium.<sup>170</sup>

Brady's alcoholism was not the only factor which contributed to his decline. Various controversies occurred

between 1919 and 1929 which, without doubt, drained him of some of the energy he normally would have concentrated on new productions. Those controversies involved the labor disputes he and other Broadway producers had with Actors' Equity and the Dramatists' Guild. Then, in addition, religious leaders publicly charged active New York producers with having offered the public productions that were immoral. These pressures culminated in the Actors Equity strikes of 1919 and 1924, and attacks lead by the Reverend J. A. Straton, which resulted in the theatre censorship drive of 1925 and the arrests of various theatrical personalities. These events are more relevant to Brady's philosophy of theatre than they are to a summary of his career. Therefore, they are simply noted at this point; a full discussion is provided in a later chapter of this study.

Despite his alcoholism and the reversals in his professional career, Brady had lost little of his expertise as a producer and the theatre industry could not ignore his presence or activities. Proof that Brady had retained his special talents, and that the industry still had confidence in him, can be found in events leading up to his production of Street Scene. At that time Brady was successful in getting Lee Shubert to loan him enough money for the project, despite the fact Shubert had already turned Rice's play down as a bad risk.<sup>171</sup> Brady gave



an advance of \$1,000 and immediately began making arrangements to produce the play at The Playhouse. Brady was also able to interest, and hire, the successful young Jo Mielziner as scene designer. In a further display of shrewd theatrical judgement, he arranged to have the play's author serve as director. The entire production, which ran for 600 performances, was produced on a budget of \$6,000.<sup>172</sup> That \$6,000 production budget was particularly low when compared to the average \$15,000 cost of a 1929 nonmusical Broadway play.<sup>173</sup> The play was the biggest success of Brady's career, both financially and critically. By the end of its second year of production, the profits from Street Scene totalled almost \$500,000 and motion picture rights to the script were sold for another \$165,000.<sup>174</sup> Such profits are of particular significance when compared to the profit of \$1,575,000 which was made on Way Down East over a thirty-seven year period, or the After Dark profits of \$75,000. Critical acclaim for the play reached its peak when it was awarded the 1929 Pulitzer Prize.<sup>175</sup> Ten months after the show opened on Broadway, Brady organized a Chicago company. The combined box-office receipts for the New York and Chicago companies reached a total of \$10,000 for one night's performance, January 1, 1930.<sup>176</sup>

The financial and critical success of Street Scene did much to restore Brady's reputation in the theatre industry and provided him with the capital he needed to

continue producing on Broadway. Only three months after Street Scene opened, Brady's reputation had improved to the point that he was asked to re-enter the motion picture industry. The invitation came from Lee Shubert and S. H. Harris, two major Broadway producers who wanted Brady to join them in a new company, American Sound Films, Incorporated.<sup>177</sup> That project did not become a reality, however, inasmuch as the stock market crash of 1929 necessitated that it be abandoned.

The failure of the stock market cost Brady an estimated \$350,000<sup>178</sup> but the continued success of Street Scene provided him with enough income to sustain his production activities. In December, 1929, following the stock market crash, Brady produced The First Mrs. Fraser, a domestic comedy by St. John Ervine.<sup>179</sup> The play, dealing with modern divorce and the younger generation's attitudes toward their elders, was staged by Grace George, who also appeared in its starring role. The 207-performance engagement of The First Mrs. Frazer<sup>180</sup> proved to be one of the last of Brady's successful productions.

With the failure of the stock market, his great success with Street Scene, and his reputation somewhat restored, William A. Brady brought the second and most active period of his career to a close.

1930-1950

The twenty-year period, 1930-1950, can best be described as the period of Brady's decline as a theatrical producer. During those twenty years Brady produced only twenty plays in New York City, an average of one production per year. The extent of the decline in his career becomes apparent when one remembers that, at the height of his career (1910-1929), he produced an average of six plays per year. A further mark of his decline can be found in the fact that only four of the plays he produced between 1930 and 1950 ran for more than 100 performances, and fifteen of them played for less than fifty performances.<sup>181</sup> Brady's most successful production of the period was a revival of Sutton Vane's allegory of death, Outward Bound (1938), starring Laurette Taylor. Outward Bound, directed for Brady by Otto Preminger, had a 215-performance engagement and marked the triumphant return of Miss Taylor to the New York stage.<sup>182</sup> The last production of Brady's career was a revival of Kind Lady in 1940. That play, a dramatization of Hugh Walpole's story, "The Silver Cord," was termed the "best melodrama of the modern theatre."<sup>183</sup> Kind Lady was first produced in 1935 and starred Grace George. Brady, who did not produce the play in 1935, bought the production and revived it on Broadway, September 3, 1940, again with Grace George as

the play's star. Brady's production ran 108 performances, five more performances than the 1935 presentation.<sup>184</sup> Following Kind Lady, Brady retired from active production.

Between 1930 and 1940 Brady was involved in very few projects that were not directly connected to production aspects of his own plays. He did not evidence a concern in outside events as he had during his middle period when he became involved in the arbitration of labor disputes or with motion picture promotion. The only Brady project of the 1930-1940 period not directly related to a particular production came in 1930 when he was involved in a controversy concerning the legality and morality of Sunday theatrical performances. That issue, like those mentioned earlier in this study, concerns Brady's philosophy of theatre and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Records do not indicate Brady's active participation in other theatrical issues until late 1940 and early 1941. At that time, after his retirement, Brady became peripherally involved in a dispute in which the Dramatists' Guild was threatening to call a strike of its members against New York theatrical producers and the League of New York Theatres, a theatre-owners' organization. Correspondence between Brady and John Golden, a producer, indicates that Brady's involvement was limited to that of advisor to the producers and theatre owners. Brady, a

former producer and a member of the League of New York Theatres, tried unsuccessfully to effect the creation of an official producers' organization which could negotiate with the Dramatists' Guild and other unions in a manner advantageous to both the producers and the theatre owners. The failure of Brady's attempts in the dispute could conceivably be attributed to both his advanced age and lack of influence among younger producers and dramatists. Brady was, at that time, seventy-eight years old and he had produced only two successful plays during the previous three years.<sup>185</sup>

The ten years between Brady's retirement in 1940 and his death in 1950 were relatively uneventful. During those ten years, Brady lived in New York City and remained actively interested in American theatre, reading "every line written in the New York papers about the stage."<sup>186</sup> During his retirement Brady received numerous visits at his Park Avenue apartment from former business associates and friends, and enjoyed frequent telephone conversations "with Al Woods and Owen Davis, contemporaries from the Nineties."<sup>187</sup> Brady was also greatly interested in his wife's continuing professional career even though he was physically unable to manage it himself. Only six months before his death Brady spoke of that interest, saying,

I won't be around much longer. But I'm determined to stay around until Grace George gets into another play and has a fine part. Give her that part and I'll die happy.<sup>188</sup>

It would appear that wish was granted. William A. Brady died January 6, 1950, during his wife's engagement in The Velvet Glove, a play for which she won the only acting award of her career.<sup>189</sup> Brady's death, which occurred on a Friday, was not announced until after Miss George had completed the Saturday performance of The Velvet Glove. The delay was according to Brady's wish that the show not be interrupted for any reason. The New York newspapers used that final wish as proof that Brady was, to the last, "a showman of the first order."<sup>190</sup>

NOTES - CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>William A. Brady, Showman (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 22-27.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond Sill, "Billy Brady, Man of Many Talents," unidentified newspaper, May 17, 1900.

<sup>4</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 64-65.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 72-73.

<sup>6</sup>Everett Holles, "Producer Brady Dies, 86; Wife Goes on With Show," New York Sunday Mirror, January 8, 1950.

<sup>7</sup>C. A. Byrne, "He Is the Happiest Man on Broadway," New York Morning Telegraph, April 5, 1903.

<sup>8</sup>Alan Dale, "Interview with William A. Brady," unidentified newspaper, 1903.

<sup>9</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 209.

<sup>10</sup>William Winter, Other Days (New York: Moffat, Yard & Co., Publishers, 1908).

<sup>11</sup>George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage (15 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), XV, p. 746.

<sup>12</sup>New York Times, April 22, 1903.

<sup>13</sup>New York Times, May 21, 1905.

- <sup>14</sup>Byrne, "Happiest Man..."
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 247.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 241.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup>New York Times, May 21, 1905.
- <sup>21</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 240.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 247.
- <sup>23</sup>New York Telegraph, March 7, 1906.
- <sup>24</sup>Ivan Joe Filippo, Landmark Litigation in the American Theatre (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1972), p. 74.
- <sup>25</sup>Odell, XIV, p. 66.
- <sup>26</sup>Filippo, p. 105.
- <sup>27</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 71.
- <sup>28</sup>New York Morning Telegraph, April 5, 1903.
- <sup>29</sup>Filippo, p. 108.
- <sup>30</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 72.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 108.
- <sup>32</sup>Odell, XV, p. 362.



<sup>33</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 134.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>36</sup>Odell, XV, p. 746.

<sup>37</sup>New York Morning Telegraph, April 5, 1903.

<sup>38</sup>New York Dramatic Mirror, December 22, 1891.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 156.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>45</sup>William A. Brady, "The Manager, The Stage and The Public," Green Book, February, 1910.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Arthur Robson Quinn, A History of American Drama From the Civil War to the Present Day (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1927), I, p. 162.

<sup>48</sup>T. Allston Brown, A History of the New York Stage, 1732-1901 (3 vols.; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1903,) III, p. 269.

<sup>49</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 188.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Brown, III, p. 556.

<sup>52</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 188.

<sup>53</sup>Byrne, "Happiest Man..."

<sup>54</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 185.

<sup>55</sup>Leander Richardson, "The Sad Decline of Theatrical Road Companies," Vanity Fair, V, 6 (February, 1916), p. 61.

<sup>56</sup>Lewis Jacobs, The Rise of the American Film. New York: Teachers' College Press, Columbia University, 1967. p. 391.

<sup>57</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 185.

<sup>58</sup>Dale interview.

<sup>59</sup>Burns Mantle and Garrison P. Sherwood, The Best Plays of 1899-1909 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1944), p. 528.

<sup>60</sup>New York Telegraph, October 21, 1906.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>"Sunday Drama at B'way House," New York Telegraph, November 21, 1906.

<sup>63</sup>New York Telegraph, December 29, 1907.

<sup>64</sup>Mantle and Sherwood, p. 510.

<sup>65</sup>"Brady Credits Roosevelt," New York World, February 24, 1906.

<sup>66</sup>Mantle and Sherwood, p. 510.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>George Henry Payne, review, New York Telegram, March 3, 1906.

<sup>69</sup>New York World, March 3, 1906.

<sup>70</sup>New York Telegram, March 3, 1906.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>New York World, March 3, 1906.

<sup>73</sup>New York Telegraph, March 5 and March 9, 1906.

<sup>74</sup>William Winter, "Lo, And His Injured Manager," New York Tribune, March 3, 1906.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>William A. Brady, "How I Made Money Out of the Property Called Grace George," New York World, May 17, 1903.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Brown, III, p. 79.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Brady, "How I Made Money..."

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Dale Interview.

<sup>83</sup>Brady, "How I Made Money..."

<sup>84</sup>Dale Interview.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>San Antonio Light, February 13, 1916.

<sup>87</sup> Dorothy Gillam Baker, Monopoly in the American Theatre: A Study of the Cultural Conflicts Culminating in the Syndicate and Its Successors, the Shuberts, (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1962), p. 560.

<sup>88</sup> New York Telegraph, March 7, 1906.

<sup>89</sup> New York Telegram, November 25, 1905.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> New York Dramatic Review, May 14, 1910.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Leander Richardson, "Bad Days for Theatre-goers," Vanity Fair, IX, 5 (January, 1918), p. 41.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Burns Mantle, The Best Plays of 1939-40 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1940), p. 424.

<sup>97</sup> Elmer Rice, Minority Report: An Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 245.

<sup>98</sup> "Brady Joins Shuberts," New York Dramatic Mirror, April 30, 1910.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> New York Dramatic Review, May 14, 1910.

<sup>103</sup> New York Dramatic Mirror, April 30, 1910.

<sup>104</sup>Baker, p. 560.

<sup>105</sup>Burns Mantle, The Best Plays of 1909-1919 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934), p. 419-420.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 445, 453.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 471.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 472-473.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 498-502.

<sup>111</sup>Toledo Blade, April 23, 1910.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>New York Pelippe, September 29, 1920.

<sup>115</sup>New York Dramatic Mirror, April 19, 1911.

<sup>116</sup>New York Pellippe, September 29, 1920.

<sup>117</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 241.

<sup>118</sup>Allen Churchill, The Great White Way (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962), p. 236.

<sup>119</sup>New York Pelippe, September 29, 1920.

<sup>120</sup>New York Dramatic Mirror, April 19, 1911.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

- 124 Rice, p. 243-244.
- 125 New York Pelippe, January 5, 1921.
- 126 Ibid.  
Details of the 1910 Brady-Jones agreement are not available, a circumstance which is not unusual since Jones' interest in the New Netherlands and Playhouse companies were not public knowledge until 1920.
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- 128 New York Pelippe, September 29, 1920.
- 129 New York Pelippe, January 5, 1921.
- 130 Ibid.
- 131 New York Times, July 9, 1920.
- 132 Ibid.
- 133 Ibid.  
Details of the Brady v. Jones case are not available since neither transcripts nor the disposition of the suit was filed for inclusion in The Third Decennial of the American Digest, 1916-1926 (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Company, 1929).
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- 137 Ibid.
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- 146 New York Dramatic Review, November 11, 1916.
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- 170 Rice, p. 264.
- 171 Ibid., p. 245.
- 172 Brady, Showman, p. 277.
- 173 Poggi, p. 67.



174 Brady, Showman, p. 277.

175 Rice, p. 259.

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177 New York Times, April 11, 1929.

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(New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930), p. 470.

180 Ibid.

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183 Brooks Atkinson, "The Play," New York Times,  
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186 Ward Morehouse, "Broadway After Dark," New  
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187 Ibid.

188 Ibid.

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190 Ibid.

### CHAPTER III

#### BRADY'S PROMOTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Given the scope and success of William A. Brady's theatrical career, as outlined in the preceding chapters, it is essential to consider the most unique aspect of Brady's production activity. When Brady's production efforts are examined, the factor that surfaces as a benchmark of his work is his innovative use of promotional activities. Brady's skillful use of publicity, and publicity-oriented production techniques, may well account for much of the commercial success he achieved as a producer. The examples and illustrations which follow were selected to provide an index to the importance Brady assigned to promotional devices throughout his career, to indicate the variety and novelty of his publicity techniques, and hence, to offer a more complete description of Brady's acumen as a theatrical producer.

While there is little question that the basic motivation for Brady's continual and often extravagant promotional enterprise was financial gain, his methods of using and generating promotional publicity show him to be cognizant of contemporary theories of the drama and

keenly aware of the popular tastes of the time. The examples which follow also represent a practical application of the qualities of showmanship for which he was famous. Brady readily accepted the label showman and, as such, stated that success in show business depended on one's combining a "sense of the news" of the day with a quality product.

That is the principle behind a good many of the more picturesque things that go on in the world of the box-office, ranging from Hollywood's gangster films down to the racket of booking lady-murderesses as vaudeville performers. It is always at least even money that pure, old-fashioned curiosity is going to make lots of people pay to see events or people who've been in the headlines. And, if you can also give them a good show for their money, it's a fine idea.<sup>1</sup>

The incidents and views cited below indicate Brady's unique way of attempting to achieve quality while capitalizing on the public's interest in factors that were novel, contemporary and exciting.

Many of the promotional methods Brady utilized in connection with his productions, methods that frequently represented his own innovation or invention, became standard practice throughout the theatre industry. To illustrate, the saturation promotional campaign, a prevalent practice in modern theatrical and commercial advertising, was successfully employed by Brady as early as 1911. In that year, while attempting to boost the potential

touring profits of George Broadhurst's melodrama, Bought And Paid For, Brady began a national publicity campaign. Brady determined that the traditional method of letting news of a play's New York success "trickle out through the country" was inadequate as a promotional tool.<sup>2</sup> To remedy that slow and unreliable process, and consequently increase public interest in the play, Brady instituted a nation-wide publicity campaign which was designed to saturate the country with news of the New York success of Bought And Paid For. He instructed his press representatives to "see to it that something about the play goes out to all this territory at least once in every two weeks."<sup>3</sup> Brady's plan, on which he was prepared to spend "at least \$10,000" in a six-month period, represented a significant departure from the average \$4,000 budgets of other Broadway shows.<sup>4</sup> As a result of that advance publicity, the national tour of Bought And Paid For realized profits "in excess of \$600,000."<sup>5</sup>

Another publicity ploy Brady used consisted of nightly reports to newspapers concerning the box-office receipts of Brady productions across the country. According to Channing Pollock, Brady's press representative, Brady always instructed his touring company managers to add \$300 to the actual box-office receipts when they telegraphed him their nightly box-office reports. Thus, when Brady showed his managers' telegrams to New York

newspaper reporters, a \$1,000 house became a \$1,300 house.<sup>6</sup> This practice was in accordance with Brady's belief that "a manager never tells the truth about his receipts unless he be either foolish or subtly dishonest."<sup>7</sup> The plan apparently was successful until, as Pollock reported, on one occasion a manager wired, "Theatre burned yesterday. No performance. Receipts \$300."<sup>8</sup>

Box-office receipts were not the only items Brady utilized in his publicity tactics. In his attempts to get free publicity in newspapers, Brady and his press representatives invented patently false news items. On one such occasion Brady told reporters that a young woman playwright in his employ could write an entire play in twenty-four hours. The playwright in question was Margaret Mayo, later author of Twin Beds and Baby Mine. To carry out his scheme, Brady provided Mayo with a script previously written by Channing Pollock. Then, with curious reporters and photographers present, she pretended to be typing the original draft at top speed.<sup>9</sup>

On one occasion Brady used fake news stories for a purpose other than that of simply advertising a particular play. During the preparation of his production of Pretty Peggy (1903), Brady invented a story which served to avert possible public censure of the production. In this instance, an English actor, Robert Loraine, had been contracted by Brady to play the male lead in the play

opposite Brady's wife, Grace George. Prior to leaving England, Loraine had eloped with another man's wife, creating a scandalous situation which, according to Channing Pollock, Brady thought might damage the Pretty Peggy production.<sup>10</sup> To counteract any negative publicity which might eventually harm the production, Brady began a publicity campaign aimed at creating a special image for the English actor—an image designed to arouse curiosity, and possibly titillate prospective spectators. Prior to Loraine's arrival in the United States, the Brady office released several articles to the New York newspapers which described Loraine as "a latter day Don Juan or D'Artagnan, fearless and adventurous."<sup>11</sup> By the time Loraine arrived in New York, public opinion had been so influenced by the Brady-inspired articles that "hundreds of women met Loraine at the dock; the English actor had become a matinee idol."<sup>12</sup>

Regardless of the success of the fake news stories relating to Robert Loraine, the bulk of Brady's promotional material was of a less spectacular nature. The publicity released for Brady's 1926-27 production of J. M. Barrie's What Every Woman Knows is an excellent example of the successful, yet reserved, publicity campaign Brady often conducted.

The What Every Woman Knows production, starring Helen Hayes, had played seventy-five performances at the

Bijou Theatre in New York and was then moved to Chicago where it opened at the Four Cohans Theatre, March 20, 1927.<sup>13</sup> Since the play was new to Chicago audiences, Brady employed his saturation campaign techniques to publicize both the play and the star. The campaign consisted primarily of releases designed to acquaint the public with the personality and activities of Miss Hayes. To illustrate, the Chicago Sunday Tribune of March 20, 1927, featured photographs of Helen Hayes and her co-star, Kenneth Mackenna, along with the following copy:

They're pictured in their respective parts of Maggie and John Shand in the revival of What Every Woman Knows effected last year for Miss Hayes by William A. Brady—a revival so successful, from all accounts, that it has placed Miss Hayes definitely among the stars after seasons of ill luck in unappealing plays or unsuitable characters. She has been in Chicago in the last six years in Bab, To the Ladies!, We Moderns, and Young Blood, and has incidentally had assignments elsewhere in five or six other plays. Mr. Mackenna is a young actor for whose talents Mr. Brady has expressed warm admiration: he was with Miss Hayes in We Moderns.<sup>14</sup>

The informative releases that characterized Brady's efforts in this instance ranged from professionally oriented items, such as the one above, to matters that essentially were social. For example, Miss Hayes and What Every Woman Knows were brought to the readers' attention by an article which noted,

One of the outstanding society events of the spring season is the tea to be given tomorrow by the board of the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society. . . . and Helen Hayes of What Every Woman Knows company will pour tea.<sup>15</sup>

Such publicity, while not of the flamboyant or spectacular nature previously associated with Brady, typified his promotional campaign for What Every Woman Knows.

During the week following the March 20 opening of What Every Woman Knows, Chicago newspapers contained four feature articles about Miss Hayes. Those articles consisted of the above notice of Helen Hayes' appearance at the social tea,<sup>16</sup> an article by Miss Hayes in which she endorsed the major theme of Barrie's play,<sup>17</sup> an interview with Miss Hayes,<sup>18</sup> and Miss Hayes' answers to a questionnaire designed to reveal one's personality.<sup>19</sup> Additional publicity was provided by the Brady office in the form of paid newspaper advertisements which expressed gratitude to the drama critics who had written favorable reviews of the play.<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted here that, with the exception of the paid advertisements mentioned above and the story concerning the social tea, the stories about Miss Hayes' activities and personality were fabrications released by Brady's New York office. One of the false items involving Miss Hayes, which the Brady office released, consisted of the following statement, purportedly written by her:



The theory of Sir James Barrie is that women have considerable to do with the success of their husbands. I heartily agree with him. Most women have a great deal to do with either the rise or fall of their husband's commercial careers. Why shouldn't they? Rather, how can they help it? Woman is more practical than man. Where he is forever blowing money, she is saving it. She has to. It is her maternal instinct, guarding against the inevitable rainy day.<sup>21</sup>

Miss Hayes was made the subject of an equally false item which, supposedly, was an account of an interview she had granted. It read,

"Sir James [Barrie] knows women," says Miss Hayes, "and, knowing women, knows men. He knows that men like to pose in public and be interviewed as to how they reached their present high station. . . And he also knows that the women who are kept to the background unless they shine socially have considerable to do with it."<sup>22</sup>

Proof of the falsehood of the above releases was provided by Miss Hayes, who disclaimed authorship of the article attributed to her and denied that she had ever been interviewed. When shown copies of the two articles, Miss Hayes firmly denied any knowledge of them.<sup>23</sup>

The actress was not surprised that the above items had been released, however, since, according to her, Brady was doing nothing unusual in releasing false stories concerning actors. According to Miss Hayes, Brady and his contemporary producers regarded actors as property which could, and should, be managed in any way beneficial to the production. In Miss Hayes' words,

They were like that. He [Brady] wasn't alone in that. It was a kind of spin-off from southern slavery, cotton-picking slavery. It really was a spin-off from slavery because they owned you. They did invest a lot. Brady took a chance on me in this play [What Every Woman Knows] and he was gambling very, very wildly when he put this thing on with an actress who was too young, who didn't seem the right person for it and who couldn't bring any great prestige as a star to it.<sup>24</sup>

Miss Hayes did comment on the possibility, and likelihood, that she attended the social tea mentioned above. She said that such functions were considered the duty of actors.

They, the producers, expected you to remain faithful and do anything outside the play they asked you to do. There was never that business of 'I refuse to be interviewed.' None of that, ever.<sup>25</sup>

Brady's concern for his actors and actresses was not limited to the matter of their public image, as in the instances involving Robert Loraine and Helen Hayes. Brady was also concerned with any public statements made by actors and actresses in his employ. That concern was noted by Miss Hayes in her recollections of the years she was employed by Brady. She maintained that, in her opinion, the Brady office preferred to release their own versions of her views, rather than leave her free to express herself.<sup>26</sup> Madge Kennedy, a star actress managed by Brady during the 1912-13 season, also contended that Brady controlled her public statements. In fact, Miss Kennedy reports that, on one occasion, she was told by a Brady

representative that she should not say anything to reporters concerning her connection with anyone in the Brady organization. She was told such statements could provide unscrupulous reporters with a basis for some scandalous or risqué news article.<sup>27</sup> It was the opinion of both Miss Kennedy and Miss Hayes that, by exercising this censorship and control, Brady and his agents were protecting both the actresses and the producer's investment from damaging publicity.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout his career, Brady's expert and profitable use of publicity remained an integral part of his talent as a producer. As late as 1929, in conjunction with his production of Elmer Rice's Street Scene, Brady continued to employ, or at least attempted to employ, imaginative tactics in the promotion of the show. For example, Rice reported that Brady tried unsuccessfully to get him to change the title of Street Scene to Atoms. Brady's reasoning was that, since the newspaper listings of Broadway attractions were arranged alphabetically, Atoms would be nearer the top of the listing than the title Street Scene. Consequently, Brady said, the new title would attract the attention of more people.<sup>29</sup> The following is Rice's description of another of the successful publicity stunts Brady used to promote Street Scene.

Prominent in the first-night audience was Al Smith, who had just lost the Presidential election, his personal popularity outweighed by anti-Catholic prejudice. In

inviting him, Brady had shrewdly sensed the publicity value of his presence at the opening of a play about the sidewalks of New York. Every paper mentioned it.<sup>30</sup>

Among the various publicity tactics Brady employed during his career, perhaps none were as effective or interesting as those which resulted from Brady's participation in the widely publicized Actors Equity Association labor strikes of 1919 and 1924, and the censorship controversy of 1925. Factors related to the equity strikes and the censorship campaign provide excellent evidence of Brady's knowledge of the news value inherent in public issues, and his unique ability to manage and use publicity.

The publicity surrounding the Actors Equity Association strike of 1919 involved, for the most part, a dispute between Equity and the Producing Managers' Association over the unionization of Broadway actors. The major issues of the dispute concerned Equity's attempts to be accepted as the bargaining agent for actors and, within the context, the acceptance by the Producing Managers' Association of an Equity-written contract form.<sup>31</sup> It was the position of the Producing Managers' Association that an open-shop policy should prevail in all Broadway theatres; Equity insisted on a closed-shop, with the Equity organization the only recognized actors' union.<sup>32</sup> On August 7, 1919, leading Broadway actors walked out of their shows and, as a result, twelve New York productions were forced to close.<sup>33</sup>

The strike, which lasted until September 5, 1919, brought forth a series of interesting and revealing public statements from William A. Brady. For almost two years prior to the 1919-20 theatrical season, Brady had been heavily involved in the motion picture industry and, at the time of the August walk-out by Equity members, Brady had only recently become re-involved in the New York theatre.<sup>34</sup> Upon his re-involvement with the Broadway scene, Brady opened a production of Owen Davis' melodrama, At 9:45, on June 28, 1919.<sup>35</sup> When the strike was called on August 7, Brady's At 9:45 became one of the twelve productions that were forced to close as a result of the walk-out of striking Equity members. Brady rejected the demands of the Equity organization and vowed to re-open At 9:45. He immediately assembled a replacement cast for the show, with himself in the role of Doane, the butler.<sup>36</sup>

Brady's decision to perform the part of Doane, a major character in the play evidently was the result of two considerations. First, Brady had trouble finding any actors who could and would fill the roles left vacant by the striking actors. His solution to the problem was to cast himself and to fill the other major role with Charles Hopkins, manager of the Punch and Judy Theatre.<sup>37</sup> Brady's second consideration was the publicity which would result from his appearance in one of his own productions. In commenting on his decision to appear on stage in order

to re-open the production, Brady stated that he had "waited, with pardonable pride, for twenty years to re-demonstrate to New York that I could act." That comment, according to the New York Times, was meant to be an insult to the talents of some Equity members.<sup>38</sup>

The idea of a producer acting in one of his own productions was not new to Broadway. In fact George M. Cohan had done the same thing at the beginning of the Equity strike. In Brady's case, however, the situation was more unique. It was a publicly accepted fact that Cohan was an accomplished actor, but New Yorkers did not view Brady as an actor inasmuch as his primary association with theatre had involved business activities. One news article attempted to remind its readers that thirty years earlier Brady had done some acting,<sup>39</sup> but, generally, spectators did not anticipate he would give a skillful or satisfactory performance. They were taken by surprise when they discovered Brady had acting talent. In reviewing Brady's opening performance, Alexander Woolcott described the general public reaction to Brady.

The younger generation in the audience may have come to scoff, but they remained to applaud, for in all his managerial years, Mr. Brady has not forgotten how to act and he pitched into last night's performance with all the zest he doubtless displayed back in 1882.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to Brady's primary purpose of keeping his production running, he used the novelty of his acting

appearance as a public platform from which he could express his views of the Equity strike. On August 19, four days after At 9:45 re-opened with Brady in the cast, Brady stepped before the curtain after the second act and spoke to the audience. In that speech he announced his intention to retire from the theatre if Equity won its demands.<sup>41</sup> Despite the promotional value that declaration may have had, it should be pointed out that Brady could not claim it as a first or exclusive act. Earlier that day David Belasco and George M. Cohan had publicly taken a similar position.<sup>42</sup> Brady played the role of Doane the butler throughout the duration of the Equity strike and, as one magazine put it, became "the only manager who successfully defied the American Federation of Labor."<sup>43</sup> In spite of his threat, Brady did not retire when Equity eventually won its battle with the Producing Managers' Association and producers were forced to accept the concept of an Equity contract.

The publicity Brady received during the second Equity strike, in 1924, did not come from high profile acts such as his performance in At 9:45. In the second controversy he gained public attention as a result of his public statements concerning personalities involved in the dispute. By the time of the 1924 dispute, the Producing Managers' Association (PMA) had lost much of its earlier effectiveness as a bargaining agency for the producers.

Dissent among members as to the best and most expedient methods of dealing with Equity caused the Shuberts, Brady, and other producers (identified in the press only as "the Shubert bloc")<sup>44</sup> to leave the organization and seek a separate agreement with Equity. The Shubert and Brady group formed their own bargaining organization, the Managers' Protective Association (MPA),<sup>45</sup> and began a publicity campaign to recruit members to the MPA from the ranks of the PMA. With the aid of statements issued by Brady, the MPA began a series of charges and counter-charges aimed at gaining support from a large number of producers who were still members of the PMA. Brady charged, for example, that the PMA and Equity had been unable to reach an agreement because the PMA was being managed by E. F. Albee, President of the Keith Vaudeville Circuit. Specifically, Brady charged that Albee wanted the PMA-Equity dispute to continue indefinitely because, upon settlement of the dispute, Equity planned to unionize vaudeville personnel.<sup>46</sup> The inference, of course, was that, by prolonging the controversy, Albee and his vaudeville associates were able to avoid the increased costs that were almost certain to accompany the unionization of vaudeville performers. In one public charge, Brady noted,

The reason is not hard to find. It is an open secret that Equity, as soon as the renewal of the theatrical agreements with the legitimate managers is perfected, intends to go into the vaudeville situation.<sup>47</sup>



By such delaying tactics, Brady argued, Albee could protect his own type of theatre enterprise. Brady further charged that A. L. Erlanger, a member of the PMA and long-time enemy of Brady, was being used by Albee to prevent a PMA-Equity settlement. In an open telegram to the New York Times, Brady wrote:

Will Mr. Harris [Sam H. Harris, President of the PMA] deny that A. L. Erlanger was given the leadership of the present so-called "die-hard" faction and that he, Mr. Harris is simply the spokesman? Does he or Mr. Erlanger deny that the latter has received and accepted advice about P.M.A. policies from Mr. Albee about what should be done in the present emergency? Will Mr. Erlanger deny that he met John Emerson [the Quity bargaining agent] and agreed to accept the eighty-twenty proposition, and after consulting with Mr. Albee refused to accept the terms he had agreed to?<sup>48</sup>

In spite of Albee's and Erlanger's denials of Brady's charges, the Shubert bloc's MPA grew in strength and, on May 6, 1924, Equity and the MPA reached a compromise agreement. Brady was privately credited with creating the mistrust within PMA ranks which eventually led to Equity's recognition of the new Managers' Protective Association.<sup>49</sup> The fact Brady's reputation as an arbiter and bargaining agent for theatrical producers was firmly established by the part he played in the 1924 actors' strike was indicated in a letter which producer John Golden wrote to Brady.

If there were more of your kind—I mean square and militant producers, who stand back of what they said they were going to do . . .

[your plan] might go places in its fight for fairer conditions for the creating-producer.<sup>50</sup>

That letter, although written in 1941 and referring to a Brady plan to settle another labor dispute, was not only a compliment, but recognition of Brady's skill as an arbitrator and his work on behalf of producers in previous years.

The fervor of William A. Brady's attacks against the reputations of Erlanger and Albee during the 1924 Equity strike was surpassed when, on numerous occasions, he turned his wrath on the dramatic critics of the New York newspapers. His public attacks on the judgement and credentials of New York's leading drama critics had a distinct news value. As a result, the attacks provided Brady with valuable advertising for many of his productions. Throughout his career Brady demonstrated a willingness to defend his own productions and those of other producers against what he considered unfair criticism. In his public statements defending the commercial theatre, Brady had two prominent targets—New York dramatic critics and people bent on the moral reform of the commercial stage.

While most of Brady's "critic-baiting" publicity involved confrontations with established New York critics, he became involved in a significant dispute with religious leaders and the police during the 1924-25 theatrical season. Burns Mantle described the season and the type of

show that formed the basis of the dispute by saying,

The season will probably figure in theatrical history as that sensational period when questionable plays flourished amazingly and the life of the drama was threatened. The bold play and the profane play, the play concerned frankly with the lives of harlots and their social kin, suddenly became the issue of the year.<sup>51</sup>

Briefly, the censorship issue came to the fore when some New York religious leaders, led by the Reverend John Roach Straton, began to apply enough social and political pressure on law enforcement agencies to force the district attorney to take action. The district attorney, a Mr. Blanton, did not immediately move to close any of the plays against which complaints had been lodged. He did ask, however, that the producers of those plays informally defend themselves against the alleged violations of the law.<sup>52</sup> William A. Brady, reportedly upset because "several of his fellow producers were making money with what were generally referred to as 'dirty plays,'" <sup>53</sup> staged one of his own called A Good Bad Woman. That play, by William J. McNally, concerned the story of Eileen Donovan, a prostitute, who sacrificed her already soiled reputation by allowing her father to find her in bed with her friend's cruel husband. Eileen's plan was to get the married man killed so that his widow, Eileen's friend, might be free to marry another, kinder man.<sup>54</sup> A Good Bad Woman, the simplistic dramatization of the "prostitute with a heart of gold" story, opened at the Comedy Theatre,

February 9, 1925.<sup>55</sup> It was apparent that, by presenting the play, Brady was openly challenging the district attorney's authority and, thereby, creating valuable publicity for a play of questionable merit. Kenneth Macgowan confirmed that possibility when he stated that the play and the resulting furor of publicity was the invention of some publicity men and that Brady's motives were totally profit oriented.<sup>56</sup> Macgowan went on to say that A Good Bad Woman was saved from an early and deserved closing because of the Brady-generated publicity.<sup>57</sup>

Whatever the publicity might have done or not done for the fortunes of A Good Bad Woman, William A. Brady used the issue's news value at every opportunity. A review of the news items relating to the incident reveal constant efforts by Brady to keep the issue alive in the newspapers. To illustrate, during the ten-day period, February 13 to February 23, 1925, the New York Times contained six articles featuring Brady and his production.<sup>58</sup> The following represents a brief, chronological summary of those articles.

February 13: Brady says he will take A Good Bad Woman off the stage if his rivals will take off theirs.<sup>59</sup>

February 15: District Attorney Blanton insists that A Good Bad Woman must be removed from the stage.<sup>60</sup>

February 17: Brady offers to make changes in A Good Bad Woman but Blanton says the play must go.<sup>61</sup>

February 19: Brady modifies lines of A Good Bad Woman.<sup>62</sup>

February 22: Brady recants and says he will stop A Good Bad Woman.<sup>63</sup>

February 23: The Reverend J. R. Straton assails Brady in his sermon.<sup>64</sup>

Three times during that same period Brady announced his intention to remove A Good Bad Woman from the stage in compliance with the district attorney's wishes and, on two of those occasions, he retracted his promise that the production would be closed voluntarily.<sup>65</sup> During that same ten-day period, Brady also issued public statements in which he vowed to either remove A Good Bad Woman from the stage or to re-write it. In making those declarations, Brady stated that his actions would depend on what his competitors did with their own morally questionable productions.<sup>66</sup> Brady's last promise to remove the show was made on February 22. That promise was retracted on February 23 after the Reverend J. R. Straton, leader of the stage clean-up campaign, attacked Brady in one of his sermons. In that attack, Straton said that Brady had "represented himself as a champion of purity on the stage and had even invited clergymen to be present at certain performances." Straton went on to say that "Brady is a lawbreaker who has gone unmolested by the district attorney."<sup>67</sup>

Using Straton's attack as another opportunity to gain publicity, Brady immediately issued a statement

defending his production and his decision not to withdraw it from the stage. As Brady put it,

Since D. A. Blanton has decided to submit all questionable plays to a citizens' jury, I think that the same privilege should be granted me regarding A Good Bad Woman. I would like the citizens' jury to decide on my play, too.<sup>68</sup>

Brady continued his defense by saying that, compared to some other New York productions, A Good Bad Woman was "Sunday school stuff."<sup>69</sup> Brady ended his statement by countering Straton's charge that theatrical people were basically immoral and that the stage was "the only place where a spot on a woman's character was an asset."<sup>70</sup> Brady's position was that, "it would be better for Dr. Straton to preach the Gospel to actors and actresses than to abuse them."<sup>71</sup> In defending the theatrical profession Brady utilized alleged statistical proof that "more ministers than actors occupy the prisons and jails of the United States."<sup>72</sup> Brady's final challenge to Straton consisted of an invitation to a public debate on the subject of the morality of the American theatre.<sup>73</sup> The challenge was apparently never answered by Straton, but the issue, as far as Brady was concerned, had served his purposes. It had enabled him to publicize his production of A Good Bad Woman.

As noted previously, William A. Brady's career as a theatrical producer was marked by press battles with various New York dramatic critics. In 1937, for example,

Brady wrote in his autobiography that he had challenged the opinions and credentials of all the famous critics, "Nym Crinkle, Willie Winter, Allen Dale, and Acton Davies" for their "variously pompous and nasty style."<sup>74</sup> He added, however, that over the years he had learned that "critic-baiting is one of the surest signs of a tenderfoot theatrical producer" and that it was a pointless effort.<sup>75</sup>

That lesson did not come easy for Brady, however, since he did not hesitate to criticize any dramatic critic when he felt the success of one of his productions was at stake. A typical example of Brady's jousts with the critics can be found in events surrounding his 1905 production of Donald MacLaren's play, The Redskin. As noted in an earlier chapter, Brady felt the production had been treated unfairly by the critics. Brady retaliated by addressing the audience at the Liberty Theatre following the second act of the play. Excerpts from that speech indicate the tone of Brady's various attacks on the dramatic critics. In his Liberty Theatre speech, Brady stated that he was "through bowing to the dictates of these men who come to our theatres and use us as targets for their shafts of cheap sarcasm and wit."<sup>76</sup> He said that the comments of the critics had had devastating emotional effects on his wife, who had, on occasion, arrived home from the theatre "with tears streaming down her face."<sup>77</sup> In referring to the personal injury critics inflicted on theatre personnel,

Brady charged that "they drove Fannie Davenport to her grave."<sup>78</sup> Brady ended his Liberty Theatre speech with a vow that the critics could not "crucify" him and that he would fight them as long as he was able.<sup>79</sup>

The above unprecedented attack on the critics was followed by an open letter from Brady to William Winter, drama critic for the New York Tribune. In that letter, Brady criticized Winter and his fellow critics for reviewing elements of a theatrical evening which Brady contended were irrelevant. Brady maintained, for example, that Winter criticized the "bad architecture, the cigarette smokers in the lobby, the rude ushers and uncouth doorkeepers," but neglected the play itself.<sup>80</sup> Winter, in answering Brady's charges, as well as Brady's challenge to print the letter, advised Brady to attend to his own business. Winter stated that, although he realized Brady needed the publicity, Brady should "cease from contemplating himself a martyr in danger of crucifixion, stop talking and attend to his business."<sup>81</sup> Winter closed his article with the following short poem, which he dedicated to Brady "who wept while speaking" at the Liberty Theatre:

#### Idle Tears

Since on the river of all-souls  
 Yo-San is Adulola,  
 Why, in this curious game of bowls,  
 Should Brady be the bowler?



Since Kara crowns "The Redskin" mush,  
     The public voice would ask, O,  
 Why should the tears from Brady gush,  
     And not from D. Belasco?  
 For Grace's tears her William, glib,  
     Could furnish reason, may be,  
 But his should wet MacLaren's "crib,"  
     And not the crib of Baby!  
 Though, since the business is good,  
     And likely long to keep so,  
 It is not clearly understood  
     Why William B. should weep so:  
 Not is it easy to descry  
     Why there should be depletion  
     For any cause from any eye,  
     Of lachrymal secretion!  
 Tears, idle tears, the poet shed,  
     And found their meaning shady—  
 But what, O What, would he have said  
     Of tears produced by Brady!  
   W. W. 82

Brady's attacks on New York critics were not limited to those instances in which one of his productions would benefit from it. To illustrate Brady's mistrust and dislike of critics, and the resulting publicity given his statements concerning them, one incident must be described. In 1923, at an annual meeting of the New York Drama League, Stark Young, a young drama critic, delivered the major speech of the evening. In his address, Young ridiculed the Drama League's choices of the season's best plays. Those productions, called "signpost" plays by the Drama League, were Loyalties, R. U. R., Six Characters in Search of an Author, The World We Live In (The Insect Comedy), Rain, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, A Square Peg, Moscow Art Theatre, Romeo and Juliet, Mary the Third, Peer Gynt, Icebound, and Pasteur. The only compliments Mr.

Young had for the entire season concerned parts of some of the plays and admiration for the technical ability and acting found in the Moscow Art Theatre company.<sup>83</sup>

The publicity the Drama League dinner received would have been limited, had the evening ended with Mr. Young's remarks.<sup>84</sup> The event was made newsworthy, however, by virtue of the fact that Young's charges were answered immediately by William A. Brady who attacked Young and his fellow critics vehemently. Brady, angered by the brash young critic, issued the following challenge:

If you know so much about the theatre, why the deuce don't you give up your job as a dramatic critic and become a theatrical producer?<sup>85</sup>

Brady then widened his attack to include other theatre critics, saying,

Speaking as an old man of the theatre, I love to hear the young theatre men of today speak about things of which they know nothing. Why, it was only the other day that a certain reviewer on a New York newspaper went into ecstasies over a certain actress' performance twenty-five years ago. I happen to know for a certainty that this reviewer is only 27 years of age. Isn't it wonderful?<sup>86</sup>

Brady then proceeded to react to Young's praise of the Moscow Art Theatre. His comment was,

I am disgusted by the praise lavished on the Moscow Art Theatre, and I honestly state that America had better companies in the larger cities thirty years ago than this very much lauded Moscow Art Theatre has today.<sup>87</sup>

Brady ended his attack on Young and the other critics by saying that he wasn't in the theatre to please the critics

and that he was only concerned with the spectator. Brady said that he would rather "have Louis Cohen [i.e. the average man] think well of a play than Heywood Broun."<sup>88</sup>

The above review of the publicity and promotional tactics of William A. Brady indicates that Brady, like his contemporaries Dion Boucicault, Augustin Daly, and David Belasco, often personally supervised the direction of actors in his productions. Brady was involved in the direction of approximately fifty-four of the 186 productions he presented on the legitimate stage during the course of his active career.<sup>89</sup> Although the exact number of shows Brady directed is uncertain due to incomplete records prior to 1900, he was credited publicly with having directed fifty-four productions, either individually or in conjunction with assistants.

The fifty-four shows Brady directed in the course of his fifty year career may seem to be a relatively small number and, indeed, they do represent less than one-third of his 186 New York productions. Those fifty-four productions assume some significance, however, considering the extent of Brady's involvement in other ventures which demanded a large measure of his time and energy. To illustrate, fifty-three of those fifty-four Brady-directed shows were produced between 1889 and 1929, the forty-year period during which Brady rose to power and fame as a theatrical producer and entrepreneur. In addition to directing

fifty-three Broadway productions during that forty-year period, Brady successfully opposed the theatrical Syndicate, built and managed a major New York theatre, produced numerous paratheatrical events such as six-day bicycle races, staged a reenactment of the Boer War, managed the careers of two World Champion boxers, and was responsible for the management of a major motion picture studio. Further, it should be remembered that during the same period Brady produced 110 other Broadway shows in addition to the ones he directed. Given the scope and quantity of his activities, newspapers of the day speculated on how Brady managed to attend to so many ventures. One such article described what it referred to as "a typical Brady-day," giving a detailed account of his activities from "9.46.53 a.m." to 9 o'clock the next morning.<sup>90</sup> The article pointed out that Brady worked each day from 9:30 a.m. until 3 o'clock the next morning, and that he normally slept only four hours a night. In describing the start of Brady's day, the article noted that

at 7 o'clock he arises, drinks a cup of coffee, says good morning and good-day to his family and is at the lithographers at 8. At 8:30 he is at the Actors' Fund and at 9 is bargaining with a playwright. This done, he feels that his day's work has fairly commenced.<sup>91</sup>

It is important to note at this point that between 1910-1929, the period of Brady's heightened production activity, Brady engaged the services of thirty stage directors,

eleven of whom worked on at least two separate Brady productions.<sup>92</sup> As Brady's production activity declined between 1930 and 1940, he directed only one play, Anthony Kimmin's comedy, While Parents Sleep, in 1934.<sup>93</sup> In total, however, Brady's directorial activity was significant.

As noted earlier, in Brady's era it was not unusual for an individual to function as both producer and director. The major difference between Brady's stage direction and that of his contemporaries seemed to be one of motive. Brady was a "notoriously stingy man"<sup>94</sup> who sought to save money whenever possible. He was also keenly aware that additional publicity could be gained by directing his own shows, particularly if there was some unusual or innovative quality to his direction.<sup>95</sup> It was that promotional aspect of his directing that set Brady apart from his contemporaries.

The most unusual or innovative aspect of Brady's stage direction, and consequently the one aspect which received the most publicity, consisted of his talent for managing and staging crowd scenes. Since that specialty and its attendant attention-getting capability was unique, it warrants consideration along with Brady's basic promotional techniques. Throughout his career Brady took particular pride in his expertise in staging plays involving large numbers of actors. On one occasion, when

alluding to this skill, Brady referred to himself as a "mob trainer."<sup>96</sup> In elaborating on that self-description, Brady stated that, in his opinion, the stage "mob" provided one of the best acting schools available to the novice actor. Brady described the benefits of the "mob" by saying,

Many a great actor has risen from the stage mob and been proud of it. In this regard it is the most apt and practical of schools. The novice gets a glimpse of the inner workings of the stage and its discipline, the demands on the actor's time, energy and talent, and tends moreover to overcome that most harrowing of diseases, stage fright, to which seasickness and buck fever are as measles to lockjaw.

Brady began employing novel methods of staging based on impressively large casts as early as 1892. In that year Brady hit upon the idea of utilizing masses of people in Gentleman Jack, a melodrama based on the sport of boxing.<sup>98</sup> The novelty of large casts, it should be noted, was not foreign to American audiences since circuses, spectacles, and events like Brady's reenactment of the Boer War had been a part of American entertainment for some time. Such events were not, however, standard manuscript dramas. When Brady presented Gentleman Jack at the Drury Lane Theatre, London, he had a boxing ring complete with bleacher seating constructed on the stage. When completed, the installation accommodated one thousand persons. His plan called for sixty of the thousand seats

to be occupied by professional actors in supernumerary roles. He then proceeded to fill the remaining seats with nonprofessional, unrehearsed citizens of London. Interestingly, he obtained the services of the non-professionals via a typical bit of Brady promotional expertise. He publicly announced that a limited number of citizens would be admitted free of charge to "a great sparring exhibition between James J. Corbett, Champion of the World, and Professor John Donaldson, the eminent boxing instructor."<sup>99</sup> The prospects of something free, or the sight of the Champion in action, was enough to provide Brady with the manpower he needed for his novel idea. When the production opened, the London citizens, sitting on the bleacher seats with the paid actors, became a part of the play itself. Inspired by the yells and cheers of the actors, who had been carefully coached by Brady, the invited "crowd" furnished what Brady described as "a convincing representation of a prizefight."<sup>100</sup>

Brady's use of a "mob" in his 1903 production of Pretty Peggy, although perhaps less spontaneous in appearance and origin than the crowd of the London production of Gentleman Jack, was equally effective. The play, by Frances A. Mathews, was a dramatization based on a British theatre riot that had erupted when the English actress, Peg Woffington, hired French dancers for one of her plays. The actress, in hiring the French, had defied the English

audience's anti-French sentiments, and when she attempted to perform the piece at the Covent Garden theatre with her French dancers, a riot ensued. Since the Mathews play was concerned with the life and career of the English actress, it naturally contained a "riot scene." Moreover, when Brady secured the performance rights to Mathews' play, he chose to emphasize that particular scene. In order to stage the scene, Brady hired 180 men and, with the aid of his assistant, Frank Hatch, rehearsed them "at least twenty times" with rehearsal periods lasting as long as five hours.<sup>101</sup> The rioters were divided into three squads, each positioned by Hatch and rehearsed in their emotional and vocal responses by Brady. Descriptions of his efforts to elicit a "fervor of excitement" from the rioters note that Brady used threats, promises, and abusive language "common among men who command men."<sup>102</sup>

Brady's use of rough language when directing actors is only one of the unique directorial methods to be found in descriptions of Brady's rehearsals. It is interesting to note, in passing, that the descriptions of Brady's rehearsals were made possible by one of his publicity tactics. He made a practice of inviting reporters to rehearsal sessions and, in doing so, he essentially was guaranteed free advertising for the production he was about to open. For example, a full-page article appeared as the result of Brady's invitation to one reporter to attend rehearsals of his production Pretty Peggy.<sup>103</sup>



The physical placement of the actors in the Pretty Peggy riot scene, although normally executed by Hatch, became Brady's primary concern during the rehearsal period. The effect that resulted when the riotous "audience" was arranged on the small stage of the Herald Square Theatre did not satisfy Brady. Brady felt that a "cramped and unconvincing scene" resulted when the riotous "audience" and the platform from which Peg Woffington addressed them were combined on the thirty-foot-wide Herald Square stage.<sup>104</sup> To remedy the problem of the overcrowded stage, Brady consulted one of his press representatives, Channing Pollock. Pollock suggested that Brady have the mob enter down the aisles of the theatre and remain in the audience area throughout the scene. Brady accepted the idea and, aware of Pollock's talent as a writer as well as the publicity potential of such staging, he assigned Pollock the task of re-writing the scene accordingly. In order to implement the new and more spectacular concept, Brady extended the production's rehearsal time an additional four days. Brady explained the delay in opening the show with a press release which said the delay was made necessary because "Miss George has a sore throat."<sup>105</sup>

Brady continued to supervise and direct the actions of "his famous mob" even after Pretty Peggy had opened on March 23, 1903.<sup>106</sup> Not only was the means Brady used to keep the crowd of rioters animated during the run of the

production novel, but it provides an interesting clue to his personality and determination to make a production exciting. The procedure he used consisted of stationing himself at one of the entrances through which the rioters charged into the theatre auditorium. On occasions when the level of their excitement did not measure up to his expectations, Brady would "deliver them friendly encouragement on the toe of his boot."<sup>107</sup> That type of directorial encouragement prompted one of the rioters to send Brady the following "note of appreciation."

Billy Brady, he's our guide  
 Billy Brady, he's our pride.  
 He guides us with his eyes of blue and  
 With his feet when he cares to.  
 To hell with tears and sights  
 Beware when he looks wise  
 And if you don't shout, "You'd better look out,"  
 Brady is our guide.<sup>108</sup>

The critical reaction to Pretty Peggy was mixed. For example, one critic said that "Pretty Peggy is just about, but not quite—I guess the run won't be a long one"<sup>109</sup> and, another noted the play had "a novelty and quaintness which leaves a good taste in the mouth. . . ."<sup>110</sup> Despite the several uncomplimentary critical comments, Brady declared the play a "hit" when his box-office receipts reached \$27,000.<sup>111</sup> Interestingly enough Brady did not claim that anything he did in the directing of the production was responsible for its success. On that subject, Brady credited the publicity the production received.

His specific comment was,

Perhaps the most potent factor in a "hit" is the newspapers. If the criticisms of a production are favorable the impression of success is very likely to become prevalent. Provincial journals quote from those in the metropolis, and the news spreads rapidly; the more rapidly because all the office machinery of the fortunate manager is immediately put in motion with the object of dissemination. Billboards chronicle the length of the engagement, and even flashlight photographs of audiences are used.<sup>112</sup>

Admittedly the favorable publicity Brady received in response to his staging of Pretty Peggy was not without precedent in the American theatre. Brady's particular brand of crowd control, evident in both Gentleman Jack and Pretty Peggy, was seen in America, and met with popular approval, as early as 1899, when Lew Wallace's Ben Hur was staged "using a throng of people, waving branches of palm, standing upon the sloping hillside of the Mount of Olives."<sup>113</sup> Additionally, Richard Mansfield's 1900 production of Henry V, in New York, drew the following comment from the critic, Norman Hapgood.

The crowds were well drilled. The scene which drew the longest and loudest applause was not written by Shakespeare nor by anyone else; it was an elaborate crowd scene suggested by the Chorus.<sup>114</sup>

With the popularity and promotional value of his staging techniques assured, Brady did not confine the use of large crowd scenes to his productions of Pretty Peggy and Gentleman Jack. He used a similar crowd scene in a

later play entitled The Pit. The Pit, which was produced and directed by Brady, dealt with the stock market and it contained a riotous scene set in "the pit," or market floor of a large stock exchange.<sup>115</sup> To obtain sufficient actors for the scene, Brady advertised for 500 men "of the Street" who were "much burdened with time and unburdened with resources."<sup>116</sup> Brady admitted that he did not need 500 crowd members for the scene, but he said that number was necessary because of a high desertion rate among amateurs. In spite of the problems that amateurs presented, Brady preferred them to professionals because he thought only nonprofessionals could deliver the spontaneous reactions he was seeking.<sup>117</sup> Brady felt that the director, or stage manager, should teach the nonprofessionals to react in a way which, while having the appearance of spontaneity, was actually carefully rehearsed, and controlled. Brady expressed the basic theory he used when directing "mob" scenes in a newspaper interview concerning The Pit. In it, he stated,

The stage manager enthuses, glows and stiffens his sinews in a mimic tempest of rage, sorrow, despair, or joy. Soon, however, he discovers that by the subtle psychology of suggestion, some few, and later more and more, become as it were hypnotized, losing themselves completely in the spirit of the situation. Every phrase is gone over and over to get the exact meaning and the proper emphasis—hour after hour and day after day, until order is finally brought out of chaos and the desired result is achieved.<sup>118</sup>

Inherent in the above quotations are indications that Brady, in addition to being innovative in his staging techniques, was also aware of the basic tenets of directing espoused by his contemporaries E. Gordon Craig and Max Reinhardt. Brady's insistence on accuracy and detail are suggestive of the techniques used by both Craig and Reinhardt as exponents of the director as the dominant artist of the theatre. Max Reinhardt, for example, was, as early as 1902, establishing the supremacy of the director's will over that of the actor.

In most instances he persuaded the actors to surrender to the ensemble . . . to the total picture he had worked out. His theory of acting, based on realism, which could be rather heavily stylized, was limited to a meager, martinet, "Do as I tell you" or "Do as I do." When rehearsing a cast, often at length and in Teutonic detail, Reinhardt usually demonstrated how he wanted each of them to speak and move. He compelled everyone to do what he did.<sup>119</sup>

The tirelessly repetitive rehearsal process which Brady used in the direction of both Pretty Peggy and The Pit was not the only common technique to be found in reports of his direction of the two plays. As noted in the reference to Brady's continued supervision of the Pretty Peggy cast and his habit of delivering encouragement to the actors on the toe of his boot, Brady was prone to personally "encourage" his actors. Brady apparently repeated the practice of physically influencing his actors when working on his production of The Pit. On the occasion

of that production, he was not content to remain behind the scenes, but instead, often went on stage during performances.<sup>120</sup> The means he used to accomplish that end, without altering the normal appearance of the crowd scene, are interesting and indicative of the thoroughness often apparent in his work as a director. To facilitate his appearance on stage, Brady hired an extra whose physical characteristics were similar to his own. He then proceeded to costume the man in a business suit identical to one in his own wardrobe. Whenever Brady thought that the crowd in The Pit was in danger of "losing its enthusiasm," Brady went on stage, taking the place of his look-alike extra.<sup>121</sup> From his vantage point within the crowd, Brady would

watch the movement of every one of the fifty-cent actors and, if needs be, goad them on to greater histrionic achievements by an occasional root in the ribs or a hook over the heart.<sup>122</sup>

One reviewer, after witnessing Brady at such a performance, commented that Brady was "amazingly careless with his fists."<sup>123</sup>

The above illustrations of Brady's directing technique indicate still another means by which Brady was able to obtain publicity for his productions. In fact, however, it may be that, by following his belief that one should give a quality product to the paying public, Brady may have gained as much fame as a director as he did from his novel and innovative staging methods.

In conclusion to this chapter, it should be noted that William A. Brady's expertise and knowledge of promotional publicity were indispensable to the success and quality of his productions. His knowledge and methods were those learned over half a century of experience in the commercial theatre. While his methods of gaining publicity may have been unconventional and, at times questionable, the basic motive behind them remained the same. It was always Brady's intention to present a quality, profitable product to the public.

NOTES - CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>William A. Brady, Showman (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1937), p. 239.

<sup>2</sup>Leander Richardson, "The Sad Decline of the Theatrical Road Companies," Vanity Fair, V, 6 (February, 1916), p. 61

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Channing Pollock, Harvest of My Years (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1943), p. 184.

<sup>6</sup>William A. Brady, "Managerial Viewpoints," Chicago Record, December 12, 1909.

<sup>7</sup>Pollock, p. 184.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 120-121.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Chicago Tribune, March 21, 1927.

<sup>14</sup>Chicago Sunday Tribune, March 20, 1927.

<sup>15</sup>Chicago Evening Post, March 27, 1927.



<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Helen Hayes, "Men Won't Like This But Helen Says It's True," Chicago American, March 26, 1927.

<sup>18</sup>Chicago American, March 23, 1927.

<sup>19</sup>Chicago Evening American, March 26, 1927.

<sup>20</sup>Chicago Tribune, March 27, 1927.

<sup>21</sup>Chicago American, March 26, 1927.

<sup>22</sup>Chicago American, March 23, 1927.

<sup>23</sup>Helen Hayes, personal interview, Nyack, New York, December 4, 1974.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Madge Kennedy, telephone interview, January 16, 1975.

<sup>28</sup>Conclusions of both the Hayes and the Kennedy interviews, cited above.

<sup>29</sup>Elmer Rice, Minority Report: An Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 251.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 253-254.

<sup>31</sup>New York Times, August 12, 1919.

<sup>32</sup>New York Times, August 14, 1919.

<sup>33</sup>New York Times, August 12, 1919.

<sup>34</sup>Although Brady had produced plays on Broadway in 1918, the major emphasis of his activity was centered in the motion picture industry. It was not until June, 1918, that he became reinolved in the New York theatre.

<sup>35</sup>Burns Mantle, The Best Plays of 1919-1920.  
New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1920), p. 337.

<sup>36</sup>New York Times, August 12, 1919.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Alexander Woolcott, "The Play," New York Times,  
August 16, 1919.

<sup>41</sup>New York Times, August 19, 1919.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Vanity Fair, November, 1919.

<sup>44</sup>New York Times, May 1, 1924.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>New York Times, May 5, 1924.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>New York Times, May 7, 1924.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>John Golden, l. s. to William A. Brady, May  
15, 1941.

<sup>51</sup>Burns Mantle, *The Best Plays of 1924-1925* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1925), p. 5.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 11-12.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 537.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>New York Times, February 27, 1925.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>The articles included in this account include only those directly related to Brady and/or his production, A Good Bad Woman.

<sup>59</sup>New York Times, February 13, 1925.

<sup>60</sup>New York Times, February 15, 1925.

<sup>61</sup>New York Times, February 17, 1925.

<sup>62</sup>New York Times, February 19, 1925.

<sup>63</sup>New York Times, February 22, 1925.

<sup>64</sup>New York Times, February 23, 1925.

<sup>65</sup>New York Times, February 21, 1925, and February 22, 1925.

<sup>66</sup>New York Times, February 13, 1925, and February 21, 1925.

<sup>67</sup>New York Times, February 23, 1925.

<sup>68</sup>New York Times, February 26, 1925.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>New York Times, February 23, 1925.

<sup>71</sup>New York Times, February 26, 1925.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 152-153.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>76</sup>New York World, March 3, 1906.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>New York Tribune, March 8, 1906.

<sup>81</sup>William Winter, "Lo, And His Injured Manager,"  
New York Tribune, March 8, 1906.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Zits Weekly, April 13, 1923.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Brady is credited with the direction of fifty-four productions by various issues of Mantle's Best Plays of ... dealing with the period 1900-1940.

<sup>90</sup>New York Mail and Express, May 17, 1900.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>This figure was reached after studying records of Brady productions found in various news clippings, scrapbooks, and issues of Mantle's Best Plays of ... .

<sup>93</sup>Burns Mantle, The Best Plays of 1933-1934 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1934), p. 531.

<sup>94</sup>Rice, p. 251.

<sup>95</sup>William A. Brady, "The Trials of a Mob-Trainer," New York Telegram, May, 1904.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Brady, Showman, p. 134.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>101</sup>New York Telegram, n.d., 1903.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Pollock, p. 122.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

<sup>106</sup>Burns Mantle, The Best Plays of 1899-1909 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1944), p. 431.

107 unidentified newspaper, April 2, 1903.

108 Ibid.

109 unidentified newspaper, April 11, 1903.

110 C. A. Byrne, "He Is the Happiest Man on Broadway," The Morning Telegraph, April 5, 1903.

111 William A. Brady, "How I Made Money Out of the Property Called Grace George," Newspaper World, May 17, 1903.

112 Ibid.

113 William W. Ellsworth, The Critic, March, 1900.

114 Norman Hapgood, New York Commercial Advertiser, October 4, 1900.

115 William A. Brady, "The Trials of a Mob-Trainer," New York Telegram, May, 1904.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 Carl Heine, "The Actor of Reinhardt's Ensemble," in Edwin Duerr's The Length and Depth of Acting (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), p. 420.

120 unidentified newspaper, n. d., 1904.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

William A. Brady was one of the most successful and most active theatrical producers of this century, producing 185 Broadway shows, managing the careers of some of America's outstanding theatre artists, and pioneering in the area of theatrical promotion. During his fifty-year career, Brady demonstrated many of the characteristics generally associated with the powerful entrepreneurs who dominated the American theatre during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when commercialism reached its peak on Broadway. It was during Brady's career that the American theatre passed from the era of melodrama and the combination companies, through the days of the Theatrical Syndicate, to the production of social commentaries such as Street Scene and Death of a Salesman.

As a result of his experience, his business acumen, his ability to gauge the changing popular tastes, and his expertise in several facets of the entertainment industry, Brady exemplified the American theatrical producer of the early twentieth century commercially-oriented theatrical era. The man was a part of his profession, not only

financially and directorially, but as a public figure whose presence and statements at times affected the entire industry.

Brady's early training with traveling troupes along the West Coast prepared him well for his later career in the legitimate theatre of New York. Then, using his shrewd business sense and the knowledge of public taste he progressively accumulated in his years of theatrical endeavor, Brady was able to finance an impressive total of 185 productions on Broadway. As a result of the quantity and (in phases of his career) regularity of his production activity, Brady was able to accumulate a degree of personal and economic power. That power enabled him to become increasingly more dominant, more capable of giving his ventures stable financial support, and more capable of assuming the role of spokesman for segments of the entertainment industry. Brady established himself as a force to be reckoned with early in his career when, in association with the Shuberts, he was instrumental in bringing about a decline in the power of the Theatrical Syndicate. Further, once he established himself in his own theatre, The Playhouse, Brady acquired a degree of financial freedom not enjoyed by the average theatrical producer. That financial freedom allowed him to produce as many as twenty-seven Broadway productions in one season, 1927. As a result of his financial independence, he also



was able to bolster the career of his wife, Grace George, and expand his own interests into new, related fields such as the motion picture industry. In spite of severe financial losses and the fact that he was approaching the end of his career, Brady was still able to command enough respect and influence to be permitted to produce one of the classics of modern American theatre, Street Scene.

During the career of William A. Brady, the American theatre passed through an era in which it was in danger of becoming a mass-produced, monotonous commodity controlled by a few powerful, and sometimes unscrupulous, men whose only motive was profit. The Theatrical Syndicate, for example, was controlled by people from outside the theatrical industry, people who considered theatre to be little more than just another way to make money. Plays were staged primarily to cash in on some current public fad, while artistry and quality were almost secondary considerations. Further, during Brady's career, the theatre was beset by economic problems, censorship threats, and labor disputes. In short, conditions in and out of the industry threatened to destroy theatre in the United States.

Brady faced conditions such as those described above throughout his career. Because of his actions, and those of other producers like him, theatre managed to survive. It was not, by any means, the action of Brady

or any other single person, that saved American theatre. Brady, however, did exemplify the talent and standards of those who enabled the American theatre to grow rather than deteriorate. Perhaps William A. Brady's greatest achievement was the manner in which he conducted his life and his career. He was an honorable, yet flamboyant and adventurous theatrical producer dedicated to producing quality entertainment. By the time of his death, Brady had changed the image of the theatrical producer. Thanks to Brady, a producer was no longer viewed as a tyrannical, unscrupulous businessman, but rather as a respectable entrepreneur, dedicated to quality. Proof of the respect Brady gained in the course of his career can be found in the fact that over 300 people from all segments of the theatre industry, religious organizations, governmental agencies, and labor organizations attended his funeral services.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, and in consideration of the outstanding career of William A. Brady, it would appear that additional studies should be conducted on the lives and careers of theatrical personalities who, for various reasons, may have been passed over in favor of better-known figures such as Belasco, Frohman, and Daly. This study has made apparent the sometimes forgotten fact that the few people who are the subjects of historical reviews of American theatre were not responsible for all of its successful

productions, not were they the only innovative, talented individuals involved in the American theatre's period of change.

William A. Brady was one of those people who, in spite of his contributions, has been neglected by historians and students of the American theatre. This is regrettable when one considers that, by the time of his death, Brady was generally acknowledged to be the "last of the managerial giants of the Broadway stage"<sup>2</sup> and the "dean emeritus of Broadway producers."<sup>3</sup>

NOTES - CONCLUSION

<sup>1</sup>New York Herald Tribune, January 10, 1950.

<sup>2</sup>Ward Morehouse, "Broadway After Dark," New York World Telegram and Sun, January 11, 1950.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, January 8, 1950.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

## WILLIAM A. BRADY NEW YORK PRODUCTION RECORD\*

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>After Dark</u>	Dion Boucicault	People's Grand Opera House	May 20, 1889	8**
		Theatre Comique	Dec. 16, 1889	8
		People's	Dec. 23, 1889	8
		Grand Opera	Jan. 6, 1890	8
		House	Jan. 20, 1890	8
		Proctor's	Mar. 10, 1890	8
<u>The Bottom of the Sea</u>	adapted by Brady***	People's Columbus	Sept. 1, 1890	8
			Nov. 10, 1890	8
<u>After Dark</u>	Dion Boucicault	Columbus	Jan. 12, 1891	8
		Grand Opera	Jan. 26, 1891	8
		House	Feb. 2, 1891	8
		People's		
<u>The Clemenceau Case</u>	William Fleron	People's	Mar. 2, 1891	8
<u>The Ticket of Leave Man</u>	Tom Taylor	People's	Apr. 20, 1891	8

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>After Dark</u>	Dion Boucicault	Grand Opera House People's	Oct. 12, 1891 Dec. 28, 1891	8 8
<u>The Clemenceau Case</u>	William Fleron	Holmes Star	Apr. 4, 1892	8
<u>Gentleman Jack</u>	Charles T. Vincent	Grand Opera House	Nov. 7, 1892	24
<u>The New South</u>	Clay M. Green and Joseph R. Grismer	Broadway Columbus Madison Square	Jan. 2, 1893 Feb. 20, 1893 Aug. 14, 1893	8 8 8
<u>Old Glory</u>	Charles T. Vincent and Brady	Columbus	Sept. 17, 1893	8
<u>The New South</u>	Clay M. Green and Joseph R. Grismer	Columbus	Oct. 30, 1893	8
<u>Gentleman Jack</u>	Charles T. Vincent	Columbus	Feb. 19, 1894	8
<u>A Man Among Men</u>	Charles T. Vincent	Columbus	Feb. 19, 1894	8
<u>Gentleman Jack</u>	Charles T. Vincent	American	Sept. 3, 1894	8

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Old Glory</u>	Charles T. Vincent and Brady	American	Nov. 5, 1894	8
<u>Humanity</u>	Sutton Vane	Columbus	Sept. 2, 1895	8
<u>The Cotton King</u>	Sutton Vane	Columbus	Feb. 3, 1896	8
<u>After Dark</u>	Dion Bouicault	Columbus	Sept. 7, 1896	8
<u>Humanity</u>	Sutton Vane	Columbus	Sept. 14, 1896	8
<u>The Cotton King</u>	Sutton Vane	Columbus	Dec. 7, 1896	8
<u>A Naval Cadet</u>	Charles T. Vincent	Academy of Music	Apr. 19, 1897	24
<u>Way Down East</u>	Lottie Blair Parker	Manhattan Harlem Opera House	Feb. 7, 1898	144
			Oct. 10, 1898	8
<u>The Turtle</u>	Joseph W. Herbert	Manhattan	Sept. 3, 1898	145
<u>Mlle. Fifi</u>	Leo Ditrichstein	Manhattan	Feb. 1, 1899	8
<u>The Turtle</u>	Joseph W. Herbert	Harlem Opera House	Mar. 27, 1899	8
<u>Mlle. Fifi</u>	Leo Ditrichstein	Harlem Opera House	Apr. 24, 1899	8



Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Papa's Wife</u>	Harry B. Smith	Manhattan	Nov. 13, 1899	147
<u>The Countess Chiffon</u>	Harry St. Maur	Miners Fifth Avenue	Feb. 7, 1900	4
<u>Mlle. Fifi</u>	Leo Ditrichstein	Miners Fifth Avenue	Feb. 12, 1900	16
<u>Woman and Wine</u>	Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck	Manhattan	Apr. 11, 1900	69
<u>The Brugo-master</u>	Frank Fixley	Manhattan	Dec. 31, 1900	33
<u>Under Southern Skies</u>	Lottie Blair Parker	Republic	Nov. 12, 1901	71
<u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u>	Harriet Beecher Stowe	Academy of Music	Mar. 4, 1901	88
<u>Foxy Grandpa</u>	R. Melville Baker	14th Street Theatre	Feb. 17, 1902	120
<u>Frou Frou</u>	Victorien Sardou	Garrick	June 5, 1902	4
<u>Pretty Peggy</u>	Frances Aymar Mathews	Herald Square Madison Square	Mar. 23, 1903 Oct. 5, 1903	48 32

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Way Down East</u>	Lottie Blair Parker	Academy of Music	Dec. 14, 1903	48
<u>The Pit</u>	Channing Pollock	Lyric	Feb. 10, 1904	77
<u>The Two Orphans</u>	Adolphe D'Ennery and Eugene Cormon	New Amsterdam	Mar. 28, 1904	56
<u>The Redskin</u>	Donald MacLaren	Liberty	Mar. 1, 1905	26
<u>Clothes</u>	Avery Hopgood and Channing Pollock	Manhattan	Sept. 11, 1906	113
<u>The Man of the Hour</u>	George Broadhurst	Savoy	Dec. 4, 1906	479
<u>The Law and The Man</u>	Wilton Lackays	Bijou	Dec. 20, 1906	54
<u>A Gentleman from Mississippi</u>	Harrison Rhodes and Thomas Wise	Bijou	Sept. 29, 1908	407
<u>The Dollar Mark</u>	George Broadhurst	Wallack	Aug. 23, 1909	48
<u>The Intruder</u>	Thompson Buchanan	Bijou	Sept. 22, 1909	13
<u>The Master Key</u>	Cosmo Hamilton	Bijou	Oct. 4, 1909	16

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Jim the Penman</u>	Sir Charles Young	Lyric	May 10, 1910	31
<u>The Mikado</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	May 30, 1910	48
<u>The Cheater</u>	Louis Mann	Lyric	June 29, 1910	78
<u>Baby Mine</u>	Margaret Mayo	Daly/Majestic/ Lyric Theatres	Aug. 23, 1910	287
<u>Mother</u>	Jules Eckert Goodman	Hackett	Sept. 7, 1910	133
<u>Diplomacy</u>	Victorian Sardou	Maxine Elliott	Sept. 13, 1910	33
<u>The Cub</u>	Thompson Buchanan	Comedy	Nov. 1, 1910	32
<u>Over Night</u>	Phillip H. Bartholomae	Hackett	Jan. 2, 1911	160
<u>An Old New Yorker</u>	Harrison Rhodes and Thomas Wise	Daly's	Apr. 3, 1911	16
<u>Sauce for the Goose</u>	Geraldine Bonner and Hutcheson Boyd	Playhouse	Apr. 15, 1911	2****
<u>The Lights of O'London</u>	George R. Sims	Lyric	May 1, 1911	32

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>H. M. S. Pinafore</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	May 29, 1911	48
<u>The Rack</u>	Thompson Buchanan	Playhouse	Sept. 15, 1911	11
<u>Bought and Paid For</u>	George Broadhurst	Playhouse	Sept. 26, 1911	431
<u>Bunty Pulls the Strings</u>	Graham Moffat	Comedy	Oct. 10, 1911	391
<u>Making Good</u>	Owen Davis	Fulton	Feb. 5, 1912	8
<u>The Fatted Calf</u>	Arthur Hopkins	Daly's	Feb. 19, 1912	8
<u>Patience</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Lyric	May 6, 1912	32
<u>The Pirates of Penance</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	June 3, 1912	28
<u>H. M. S. Pinafore</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	June 27, 1912	2
<u>The Mikado</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	June 29, 1912	2

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Just Like John</u>	George Broadhurst and Mark Swan	48th Street	Aug. 12, 1912	16
<u>Little Miss Brown</u>	Phillip Bartholomae	48th Street	Aug. 29, 1912	84
<u>Little Women</u>	Marian de Forest, from Louisa M. Alcott	Playhouse	Oct. 14, 1912	184
<u>The Point of View</u>	Jules Eckert Goodman	48th Street and Daly's	Oct. 25, 1912 (matinee) and Nov. 4, 1912	9
<u>Hindle Wakes</u>	Stanley Houghton	Maxine Elliot	Dec. 9, 1912	32
<u>The Drone</u>	Rutherford Mayne	Daly's	Dec. 30, 1912	2
<u>The Woman of It</u>	Frederick Lonsdale	39th Street	Jan. 14, 1913	15
<u>The Painted Woman</u>	Frederick A. Krummer	Playhouse	Mar. 5, 1913	2
<u>The Beggar Student</u>	Karl Millocker	Casino	Mar. 22, 1913	33
<u>Divorcons</u>	Victorien Sardou	Playhouse	Apr. 1, 1913	55

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Rosedale</u>	Lester Wallack	Lyric	Apr. 18, 1913	23
<u>The Mikado</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	Apr. 21, 1913	16
<u>Arizona</u>	Augustus Thomas	Lyric	Apr. 28, 1913	40
<u>H. M. S. Pinafore</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	May 5, 1913	8
<u>Iolanthe</u>	Gilbert and Sullivan	Casino	May 12, 1913	40
<u>Believe Me Xantippe</u>	Frederick Ballard	39th Street	Aug. 19, 1913	79
<u>The Family Cupboard</u>	Owen Davis	Playhosue	Aug. 21, 1913	140
<u>The Things That Count</u>	Lawrence Eyre	Maxine Elliott	Dec. 8, 1913	224
<u>Don't Weaken</u>	Walter Hackett	Maxine Elliott	Jan. 14, 1914	5
<u>Too Many Cooks</u>	Frank Craven	39th Street	Feb. 24, 1914	223
<u>The Charm of Isabel</u>	Sydney Rosenfeld	Maxine Elliott	May 5, 1914	7

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Apartment 12K</u>	Lawrence Rising	Maxine Elliott	July 20, 1914	16
<u>Sylvia Runs Away</u>	Robert Housum	Playhouse	Aug. 20, 1914	12
<u>The Elder Son</u>	Lucien Nepoly, adapted by Frederick Fenn	Playhouse	Sept. 15, 1914	23
<u>Life</u>	Thompson Buchanan	Manhattan Opera House	Oct. 24, 1914	161
<u>Sinners</u>	Owen Davis	Playhouse	Jan. 7, 1915	220
Robert B. Mantell Repertory Company: <u>Richelieu</u> , <u>King John</u> , <u>Hamlet</u> , <u>King Richard III</u> , <u>Louis XI</u> , <u>Macbeth</u> , <u>The Merchant of Venice</u> , <u>Julius Caesar</u> , <u>Othello</u> , <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> , <u>King Lear</u>		44th Street	Feb. 1-27, 1915	
<u>The White Feather</u>	Lechmere Worrall and J. E. H. Terry	Comedy	Feb. 4, 1915	140

Number of  
Performances

Opening Date

Theatre

Author

Play

Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company: <u>Yeoman of the Guard, The Mikado, The Sorcerer, Trial by Jury, H. M. S. Pinafore, Iolanthe</u>	48th Street	Apr. 19-June 19, 1915	
<u>Husband and Wife</u>	49th Street	Sept. 21, 1915	15
<u>Stolen Orders</u>	Manhattan Opera House	Sept. 24, 1915	19
New York Playhouse Company: (repertory)	Playhouse	Sept. 28-Apr. 29, 1916	
<u>The New York Idea</u>	Langdon Mitchell	Sept. 28	
<u>The Liars</u>	Henry Arthur Jones	Nov. 9	
<u>Major Barbara</u>	B. B. Shaw	Dec. 9	
<u>The Earth</u>	J. B. Fagan	Feb. 15	
<u>Captain Brassbound's Conversion</u>	G. B. Shaw	Mar. 29	
<u>The Man Who Came Back</u>	Jules Eckert Goodman	Sept. 2, 1916	457
<u>Object: Matrimony</u>	Montague Glass and Jules E. Goodman	Oct. 25, 1916	30



Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Little Women</u>	Marian de Forest from Louisa M. Alcott	Park	Dec. 18, 1916	24
<u>The Land of the Free</u>	Fannie Hurst and Harriet Ford	48th Street	Oct. 2, 1917	32
<u>Forever After</u>	Owen Davis	Central/ Playhouse	Sept. 9, 1918	312
<u>I. O. U.</u>	Hector Turnbull and Willard Mack	Belmont	Oct. 5, 1918	10
<u>Peter's Mother</u>	Mrs. Henry de la pasture	Playhouse	Oct. 29, 1918	15
<u>Home Again</u>	Robert McLaughlin from stories of J. W. Riley	Playhouse	Nov. 11, 1918	40
<u>At 9:45</u>	Owen Davis	Playhouse	June 28, 1919	139
<u>The "Ruined" Lady</u>	Frances Nordstrom	Playhouse	Jan. 19, 1920	33
<u>Opportunity</u>	Owen Davis	48th Street	July 30, 1920	138
<u>Immodest Violet</u>	David Carb	48th Street	Aug. 30, 1920	8

<u>Play</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Theatre</u>	<u>Opening Date</u>	<u>Number of Performances</u>
<u>Anna Ascends</u>	Harry Chapman Ford	Playhouse	Sept. 22, 1920	unknown
<u>The Skin Game</u>	John Galsworthy	Bijou	Oct. 20, 1920	176
<u>Thy Name Is Woman</u>	Carl Schaner and Benjamin F. Glazer	Playhouse	Nov. 15, 1920	120
<u>The Young Visitors</u>	Mrs. George Nathan and Margaret MacKenzie	39th Street	Nov. 29, 1920	16
<u>The Teaser</u>	Martha M. Stanley and Adelaide Matthews	Playhouse	July 27, 1921	29
<u>Personality</u>	Phillip Bartholomae and Jasper Ewing	Playhouse	Aug. 27, 1921	9
<u>Nature's Nobleman</u>	Samuel Shipman and Clara Lipman	Apollo	Nov. 14, 1921	74
<u>Marie Antoinette</u>	Edymar	Playhouse	Nov. 22, 1921	16
<u>Bought and Paid For</u>	George Broadhurst	Playhouse	Dec. 7, 1921	30

Number of  
Performances

Opening Date

Theatre

Author

Play

<u>Drifting</u>	John Cotton and D. H. Andrews	Playhouse	Jan. 2, 1922	63
<u>The Nest</u>	Paul Gerald, adapted by Grace George	48th Street	Jan. 28, 1922	161
<u>The Law Breaker</u>	Jules Eckert Goodman	Booth	Feb. 1, 1922	90
<u>Up the Ladder</u>	Owen Davis	Playhouse	Mar. 6, 1922	117
<u>Dreams for Sale</u>	Owen Davis	Playhouse	Sept. 13, 1922	13
<u>Swifty</u>	John Peter Tookey and W. C. Percival	Playhouse	Oct. 16, 1922	24
<u>The World We Live In</u> (The Insect Comedy)	Josef and Karel Capek, adapted by Owen Davis	Jolson	Oct. 31, 1922	111
<u>Up She Goes</u>	Frank Craven	Playhouse	Nov. 6, 1922	256
<u>The Mad Honeymoon</u>	Barry Connors	Playhouse	Aug. 7, 1923	16

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Chains</u>	Jules Eckert Goodman	Playhouse	Sept. 19, 1923	123
<u>Leah Kleschna</u>	C. M. S. McLellan	Lyric	Apr. 21, 1924	32
<u>That Awful Mrs. Eaton</u>	John Farrar and Stephen V. Benet	Morosco	Sept. 29, 1924	16
<u>Simon Called Peter</u>	Jules Eckert Goodman and Edward Knoblock	Klaw	Nov. 10, 1924	88
<u>A "Good" Bad Woman</u>	William J. McNally	Comedy	Feb. 9, 1925	16
<u>What Every Woman Knows</u>	Sir James M. Harris	Bijou	Apr. 13, 1926	74
<u>Kitty's Kisses</u>	Phillip Bartholomae and Otto Harbach	Playhouse	May 6, 1926	46
<u>Slaves All</u>	Edward Percy	Bijou	Dec. 6, 1926	8
<u>The Padre</u>	Stanley Logan	Ritz	Dec. 27, 1926	32
<u>The Thief</u>	Henri Bernstein adapted by C. H. Chambers	Ritz	Apr. 22, 1927	64

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>A Free Soul</u>	Willard Mack, from novel by Adela R. St. John	Playhouse	Jan. 12, 1928	100
<u>Street Scene</u>	Elmer Rice	Playhouse	Jan. 24, 1929	600
<u>Now-A-Days</u>	Arthur F. Brash	Forrest	Aug. 5, 1929	8
<u>The First Mrs. Fraser</u>	St. Jon Ervine	Playhouse	Dec. 28, 1929	207
<u>Cafe</u>	Marya Mannes	Ritz	Aug. 28, 1930	4
<u>A Church Mouse</u>	Ladilaus Fodor	Playhouse	Oct. 12, 1931	164
<u>Little Women</u>	Marian de Forest from Louisa M. Alcott	Playhouse	Dec. 7, 1931	17
<u>Adam's Wife</u>	Theodore St. John	Ritz	Dec. 28, 1931	8
<u>If Booth Had Missed</u>	Arthur Goodman	Maxine Elliott	Feb. 4, 1932	21
<u>Alice Sit-By- The-Fire/The Old Lady Shows Her Medals</u>	Sir James Barrie one-acts	Playhouse	Mar. 7, 1932	32

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Bulls, Bears, and Asses</u>	Milton H. Gropper	Playhouse	May 6, 1932	2
<u>Domino</u>	Marcel Achard, adapted by Grace George	Playhouse	Aug. 16, 1932	7
<u>Mademoiselle</u>	Jacques Deval, adapted by Grace George	Playhouse	Oct. 18, 1932	103
<u>Bad Manners</u>	Dana Burnet and William B. Jutte	Playhouse	Jan. 30, 1933	8
<u>A Saturday Night</u>	Owen Davis	Playhouse	Feb. 28, 1933	40
<u>Her Tin Soldier</u>	Frederick Rath	Playhouse	Apr. 6, 1933	2
<u>A Party</u>	Ivor Novello	Playhouse	Aug. 23, 1933	45
<u>While Parents Sleep</u>	Anthony Kimmins	Playhouse	June 4, 1934	16
<u>Fools Rush In</u>	Norman Zeno	Playhouse	Dec. 25, 1934	14
<u>Matrimony Pfd.</u>	Louis Verneuil, adapted by Grace George and James Forbes	Playhouse	Nov. 12, 1936	61
<u>The Circle</u>	W. Somerset Maugham	Playhouse	Apr. 18, 1933	72

Play	Author	Theatre	Opening Date	Number of Performances
<u>Come Across</u>	Guy Beauchamps and Michael Pertwee	Playhouse	Sept. 14, 1938	13
<u>Outward Bound</u>	Sutton Vane	Playhouse	Dec. 22, 1938	215
<u>Billy Draws a Horse</u>	Lesley Storm	Playhouse	Dec. 21, 1939	13
<u>Kind Lady</u>	Edward Chodorov, from Hugh Walpole's "The Silver Cord"	Playhouse	Sept. 3, 1940	107

\*The record consists of 185 productions presented in New York City between 1889 and 1940, for a total of 11,273 performances (allowing estimates of eight performances per six days).

\*\*The performances of After Dark noted in this listing constitute only those for which reliable records exist and do not reflect cast changes, out-of-town engagements, or those engagements for which no closing date was found.

\*\*\*George C. D. Odell's Annals of the New York Stage and T. A. Brown's A History of the New York Stage fail to list any author for the play other than adaptation credit given to Brady.

\*\*\*\*Sauce For The Goose was produced at the special opening of the Playhouse theatre, playing only a matinee and evening engagement.

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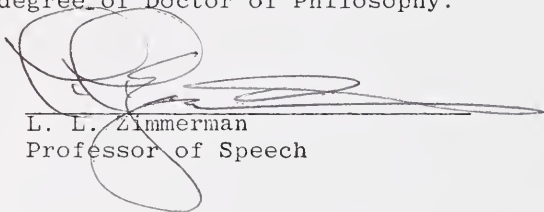
## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nevis Ezelle Hagler, Jr., was born on May 31, 1943, in Center, Texas. In May, 1961, he was graduated from Center High School in Center, Texas. Four years later, in June, 1965, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in Speech and Theatre from Stephen F. Austin State University. He subsequently worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of Speech at Stephen F. Austin State University, where he was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in August, 1967. From September, 1966, until August, 1967, he taught courses in Speech and Theatre at Mississippi State University in State College, Mississippi. From September, 1967, until August, 1969, he taught at Southern State College in Magnolia, Arkansas. In September, 1969, he accepted a position as Director of Technical Theatre at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, and held that position until he entered a program of study leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Florida in September, 1972. From September, 1972, until August, 1975, he worked as a graduate teaching assistant in the departments of Speech and Humanities at the University of Florida. In

September, 1975, he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Speech and Director of Theatre at Houston Baptist University in Houston, Texas.

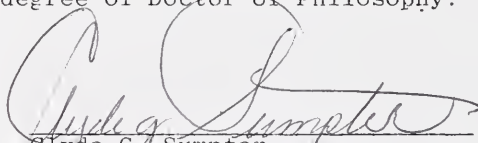
Nevis Ezelle Hagler, Jr., is married to the former Sandra Lee Carnelly, who has richly endowed him with two daughters, Lisa Kristin and Kimberly Lyn. He is a member of the Speech Communication Association and Alpha Psi Omega.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



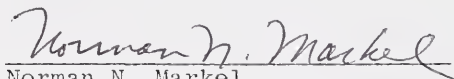
L. L. Zimmerman  
Professor of Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



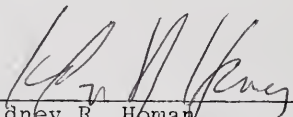
Clyde G. Sumpter  
Assistant Professor of  
Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Norman N. Markel  
Associate Professor of  
Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sidney R. Homan  
Associate Professor of  
English

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Speech in the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December, 1975

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, Graduate School